

262 FOOTBALLS WON FOR COLLECTING "FOOTER-STAMPS!" *See Inside*

The Magnet ^{2^D}

*Billy Bunter's
Own Paper*



**BUNTER
THE
FUNK!**

Roll Up For Another Big Prize-Giving!

500 FREE FOOTBALLS



THIS WEEK'S FOOTER-STAMPS!



STOP! If you are a "Footer-Stamps" collector and you have not yet won a free football, here's another opportunity. 500 Free Footballs are waiting for the readers who score the highest number of "goals" with "Footer-Stamps" in the third month's competition. First of all there are ten more stamps here, depicting six different actions on the football field. Cut them out at once, as there's another complete "goal" among them, and the odd stamps will, no doubt, fit in with others you may have left over from previous weeks (or even previous contests).

TO SCORE A "GOAL," remember you collect a complete set of six stamps (numbered 1 to 6), made up of the following movements: **KICK-OFF**—**DRIBBLE**—**TACKLE**—**HEADER**—**SHOT**—**GOAL**. (Note that the "goal" stamp by itself does not count as a "goal.")

If you want to score some other quick "goals" to swell your total, remember that "Footer-Stamps" also appear in other grand papers like **GEM** and **MODERN BOY**. Now, when you have scored as many complete "goals" as possible with the stamps you have collected, write your total ("goals," NOT separate stamps) in the space provided on the coupon below.

Add your name and address to the coupon also, then cut it out whole and attach your sets of goal-scoring stamps only to it. Post in a properly stamped envelope to:

MAGNET, "Footer-Stamps" (October), 1, Tallis House, London, E.C.4 (Comp.), so as to reach there not later than **SATURDAY, November 5th, 1938**, the closing date.

OVERSEAS READERS—you are in this scheme also, and special prizes in cash are to be awarded for the best scores from readers outside the British Isles. In your case, send in as directed above, but note that the closing date is extended to **WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1st, 1939**.

Now, when you have sent in your October "goals," keep any odd stamps by you until next week, when we are making yet another big offer for "Footer-Stamps" collectors. So go on collecting still, just in case you don't pull it off this month.

RULES: 500 Footballs will be awarded in the October contest to the readers declaring and sending in the largest number of "goals" scored with "Footer-Stamps." The Editor may extend or amend the prize list in case of too many ties, and no reader may win more than one prize in "Footer-Stamps."

Each "goal" must consist of a set of "Footer-Stamps" Nos. 1 to 6, inclusive—and all claims for prizes to be made on the proper coupon (given this week). No allowance made for any coupon or stamps mutilated or lost or delayed in the post or otherwise. No correspondence! No one connected with this paper may enter, and the Editor's decision will be final and legally binding throughout.

(N.B.—"Footer-Stamps" may also be collected from the following papers: **Gem, Modern Boy, Champion, Boy's Cinema, Detective Weekly, Thriller, Wild West Weekly, Triumph, and Sports Budget.**)

.....The MAGNET.....

"Footer-Stamps" (October)

Write in bold figures the number of "goals" you have scored with "Footer-Stamps" and attach your sets of goal-scoring stamps to this coupon.

I agree to accept the Editor's decision as final and binding.

Name.....

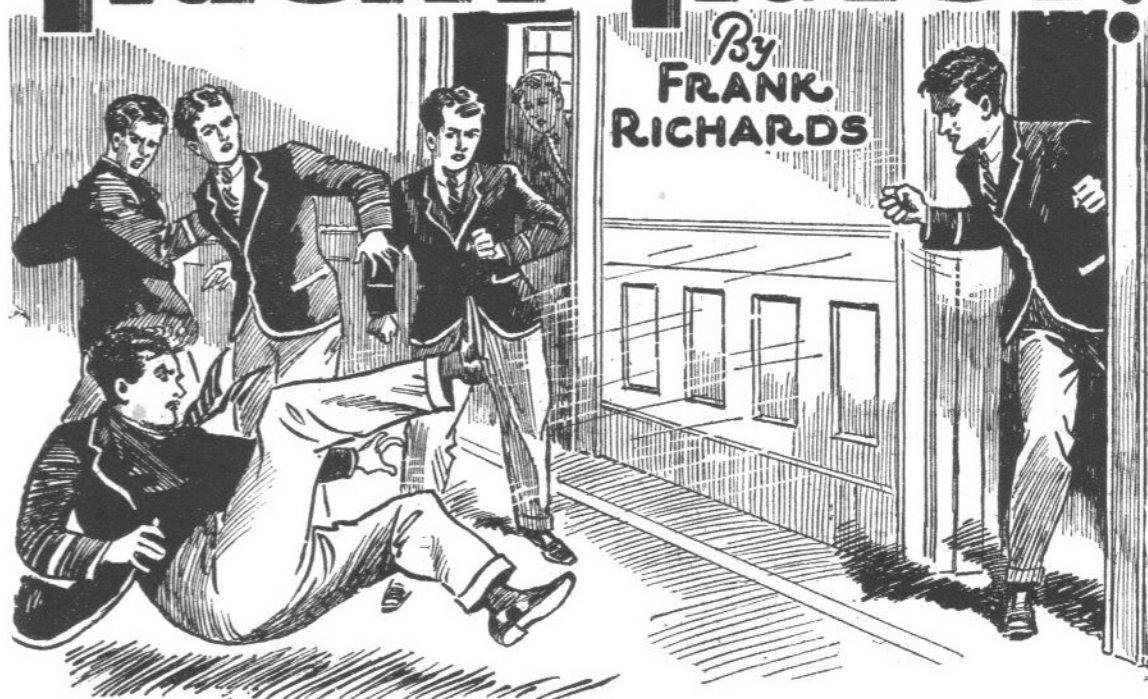
Address.....

N.B.—No responsibility taken for incorrect totals.

Over 250 FOOTBALLS WON! See Result and Winners on Page 21.

Gilbert Tracy can play football better than any man at Greyfriars. But when it comes to "playing the game"—he just can't do it!

TRICKY TRACY!



Gilbert Tracy was hurled out of the study into the Remove passage. He crashed there, with a yell, and sprawled. Harry Wharton stood in the doorway, with clenched hands, waiting for him to come back!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bunking Bunter!

"SEEN Tracy, you fellows?" asked Billy Bunter.

Five fellows chuckled as Bunter asked that question.

Harry Wharton & Co. were in the quad, talking football, in break that morning. Gilbert Tracy, the new junior in the Remove, was standing not ten feet from them.

So when Bunter rolled up and inquired after Tracy, they could not help chuckling. Tracy, really, was big enough to be seen—by anybody but the Owl of the Remove.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" said Bunter, blinking at the Famous Five through his big spectacles. "I asked if you'd seen Tracy. I want to find him. I say, you fellows, Quelch has left the key in the Form-room door."

"What about that, fathead?" asked Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter grinned.

"Don't you see?" he inquired.

Harry Wharton & Co. apparently did not see. They gazed at the fat Owl of the Remove in surprise. Tracy, loafing at a little distance, with his hands in his pockets, stared at him.

Mr. Quelch, the Remove master, was accustomed to lock the Form-room after dismissing his Form. Generally he took the key away with him; but if he had, for once, left it by inadvertence in the lock, it was not a matter of any special interest to any fellow in his Form.

Except, it appeared, to Billy Bunter. Bunter's fat face was irradiated by a wide grin that stretched almost from one fat ear to the other.

"Old Prout came along and spoke to him, and he walked off with Prout and forgot to take out the key," he explained. "It's left sticking in the door. See? Suppose a fellow cut along and put the key on the inside—"

"What, on earth for?" asked Harry Wharton.

"And locked the door," continued Bunter. "He could drop out of the window easy enough—it's open. See?"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

Bunter chortled.

Super School Story of HARRY WHARTON & CO., with Gilbert Tracy—who has been "up against" his Form-master ever since he came, unwillingly, to Greyfriars—taking the leading role.

"Rather a lark on Quelch—what?" he gurgled. "When we go in for third school he won't be able to open the door. See? Quelch will be fearfully wild! Don't you think so?"

"Very likely, I think," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "I prefer him tame in class, though."

"But look what a chance it is of pulling his leg!" urged Bunter. "That's not all, either. It may take a jolly long time to get the door open, and every minute we have to wait is a minute off class. We may get ten minutes or more clear gain."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Some stunt—what?" chuckled Bunter. "Safe as houses, too! If Tracy knew he would be on this like a shot! He's always ragging Quelch. He's been on his track ever since he came this term. Tracy wouldn't miss this. I'd do it myself, only a fellow might be spotted in the Form-room passage. There's always some beak prowling about, and I'd rather not risk it. Know where Tracy is?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Like to risk it, Tracy?"

"Eh? Where's Tracy?" asked Bunter, blinking round. "Oh, is that Tracy? I thought it was Smithy! I say, Tracy—"

Tracy walked away. Bunter rushed after him and grabbed him by his sleeve.

"I say, old chap—" he gasped.

Bunter got no farther than that. Tracy grabbed him by the collar and sat him down in the quad with a heavy bump.

Bunter sat and roared, and Tracy walked away and left him to roar.

The Famous Five roared, too.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Owl! Beast!" gasped Bunter, tottering to his feet. "I say, you fellows, that swab funks it! I say, what about you, Cherry?"

"I'm not fearfully keen on pulling Quelch's leg!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "I'd rather pull a safer leg when I start leg-pulling."

"But it's absolutely safe!" urged Bunter. "Now I come to think of it, there ain't any chance of getting spotted in the Form-room passage—I mean to say, there won't be any beaks prowling about, or anything of that kind—"

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wish you wouldn't cackle whenever a fellow opens his mouth!" yapped Bunter. "I say, Inky, what about you?"

"The answer is in the absurd negative!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Nugent, old chap—"

"Fathead!" said Frank Nugent. "Leave Quelch alone. He gets enough ragging from Tracy, without you barging in."

"Well, he jawed me in class this morning," said Bunter, "making out that I hadn't done my prep, just because I—I hadn't, you know. I'd like to make him sit up! Will you go and bag that key, Bull, and—"

"No, I won't, fathead!" said Johnny Bull.

"Funky lot, I must say!" said Bunter, in disgust. "I thought Tracy would jump at it, but he hasn't. I suppose he's funky, like you lot. Look here, if you funk going to the Form-room door you can get in at the window—it's open! What about that, Wharton?"

"Nothing about that," answered the captain of the Remove. "Shut up, old fat man! Now, you fellows, about St. Jude's on Wednesday—"

"For goodness' sake don't start jawing football now!" exclaimed Billy Bunter, in great exasperation. "If it's going to be done, it's got to be done in break. Are you going to miss a chance like this, of making Quelch sit up and snort?"

"Exactly!" assented Wharton. "Now dry up! On Wednesday—"

"I say, you fellows—"

"My hat! Is he wound up?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "You fat ass, nobody is going to lock Quelch out of his Form-room—unless you do! You can get on with it, if you like. Now ring off!"

"Well, he might remember the key and come back for it. I don't want to be copped—"

"But you wouldn't mind if one of us got copped, you fat villain!"

"Oh, I mean, Quelch won't come back for the key. There's absolutely no danger of getting copped—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're wasting time with all this cackling!" snorted Bunter. "Look here, if you haven't the pluck to do a thing that's as safe as houses, I can jolly well say plainly— Leggo, you beasts! Wow!"

Bump!

For the second time Billy Bunter sat down on the quadrangle.

The Famous Five walked off, to continue their discussion of Soccer at St. Jude's, out of range of the fat Owl's eloquence.

"Beasts!" roared Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove heaved up his weight and glared after the Famous Five with a ferocious glare. Then he turned towards the door of the House.

This chance of making Quelch sit up and snort was, in Bunter's opinion, too good to be lost. Moreover, as he had so sagely pointed out, every minute that the Form had to wait to be let in was a minute off the lesson, and the more a lesson was curtailed the better Bunter liked it. Tracy, on whom he had counted, had failed him—the Famous Five were not taking it on—and Bunter resolved to try it on himself.

But he paused.

Safe as it was—absolutely safe—for another fellow, it did not seem quite so absolutely safe for Bunter personally. A beak might be prowling by the Form-

rooms. If another fellow was "copped," Bunter would be sorry for him, of course, but it would not matter really a lot. But if Bunter was copped, it meant whops for Bunter, and that was serious.

So, on second thoughts—proverbially the best—Bunter did not roll into the House. He rolled along to the windows of the Remove Form Room.

The middle window was open. It was an easy climb for any fellow in the Remove—except Bunter. It was doubtful, however, whether Bunter could negotiate it. He had more weight to lift than the other fellows, and the law of gravitation had more effect on him than on the rest of the Remove.

If he got in at the window, it was safe enough to carry out that great scheme for making Quelch sit up and snort. But he eyed the high stone window-sill dubiously.

However, he was going to try it on. He made a jump and caught hold; his fat fingers slipped, and he dropped back.

Bump!

"Wow!" gasped Bunter.

"It was the third time in break that he had sat down on the quad, and this time he sat very hard and heavy. He sat and gasped.

"Ha, ha! Do that again, Bunter!"

The fat junior blinked round. Tubb of the Third was watching him, with a grinning face.

Billy Bunter gave him a glare. He scrambled up with the intention of booting Tubb of the Third! He was not going to be sniggered at by a Third Form fag.

"I say, like a bunk up?" asked Tubb.

"Oh!" Bunter changed his hostile intentions at once. "Yes! Come and give me a bunk up, kid!"

"What-ho!" said Tubb.

He came over to Bunter—still grinning. The fat Owl stood under the broad stone window-sill, reaching up at it. George Tubb stooped, and shoved, and heaved, and Bunter got a grip on the sill. Another hefty heave from Tubb below, and he got his fat elbows on it.

Then Tubb ceased to heave.

He stood back, and grinned at Bunter.

"I say, bunk me up!" gasped Bunter.

"Can't you do the rest?" grinned Tubb.

"Not unless you bunk me up!" gasped the fat Owl.

"I thought not!" agreed Tubb. "Ha, ha!"

And the iniquitous Tubb, having thus landed Bunter, walked away, sniggering!

Billy Bunter gurgled wrath. That cheeky little beast of a fag had been pulling his fat leg—landing him in a fix like this! He had walked off, and left him to it—sniggering!

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He heaved, and heaved! But he could not heave his extensive weight up to the window-sill. He was extremely reluctant to drop back and land on the earth. He had sat on the quad three times already, and that was really more than enough. He hung on, breathless.

Half-way to his destination, he blinked into the Form-room, through the half-open window—unable to climb in, unwilling to fall back, in a state of breathless wrath and dismay; suspended, like Mahomet's coffin, between the heavens and the earth. And, as he hung there, the Form-room door opened, and Tracy, the new junior, stepped quickly in, and shut the door quickly after him.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Face At The Window!

BILLY BUNTER, with his eyes and spectacles just above the level of the window-ledge, blinked across the Form-room at Tracy.

His first impression was that Gilbert had come in there to play that trick with the key—locking Quelch out, and escaping by the window after turning the key on the inside.

But Tracy had shut the door with the key still outside; and, as soon as he was in the room, he cut across quickly to the Form-master's desk.

Bunter grinned, forgetting his own uncomfortable situation for the moment as he watched Tracy.

Tracy was not there to play that prank with the key. But, having learned from Bunter that the Form-room was accessible, he had dodged in, to play some other trick on Quelch—probably a much more unpleasant one.

Had he glanced up at the window, Tracy certainly would have seen the fat head and glimmering spectacles of the Owl of the Remove there.

But he did not once glance towards the window.

He was in haste—the Form-room in break was dangerous ground! Every movement he made was hurried, and he was breathing very quickly.

Standing at Mr. Quelch's desk, he took a small bottle from his pocket, and jerked out the cork. With his other hand, he lifted the lid of the desk. A dark fluid streamed out of it.

Bunter's eyes opened wide behind his big spectacles as he watched that proceeding!

He could not make out what it was, at the distance, but he could guess easily enough that it was ink in the bottle!

Tracy was pouring ink over Quelch's books and papers in the Form-master's desk.

Bunter's opinion of that proceeding was that it was a potty trick. Locking Quelch out of the Form-room would no doubt have made him sit up and snort, as Bunter expressed it. But inking his books would make him as mad as a hatter—and it was very likely that he would suspect Tracy first shot. Billy Bunter, certainly, would never have dreamed of ragging Quelch in this reckless style.

Having almost emptied the bottle, Tracy shut down the lid of the desk, and hurried away from it.

Bunter expected to see him cut back to the door. But Gilbert Tracy was not finished yet.

He cut across to the juniors' desks, and stopped at Harry Wharton's.

Billy Bunter watched him blankly.

He could not guess what Tracy was up to now. But in another moment he saw—with increasing astonishment.

Tracy picked up the pen that lay by the ink-well on the desk, the pen that Wharton would be using in class when the Remove came in. He dipped the handle of the pen in the open bottle, and then laid it back in its place. Some of the ink from the bottle had been transferred to the penhandle; why, was a mystery to Billy Bunter.

He blinked at Tracy in amazement.

Tracy seemed to have finished now. He corked the bottle, slipped it into his pocket, and cut swiftly across to the Form-room door.

He opened that door a couple of inches, and peered out, evidently to make sure that the coast was clear before he emerged into the passage.

The coast, apparently, was clear, for the new junior stepped out, and shut the door after him. Bunter heard the click

of the key as he locked the door again on the outside.

Tracy was gone.

Bunter was left blinking.

Gilbert Tracy had been hardly more than a minute in the Form-room, and during that minute he had not turned his eyes towards the window; and he went in blissful ignorance of the fact that a fat and astonished Owl had watched all his proceedings.

"Must be batty!" murmured Bunter in wonder.

That was what it looked like to the amazed Owl. Inking the books and papers in the master's desk was a jape on Quelch; the sort of thing to be expected from Tracy, who had been "up against" his Form-master ever since he had come, unwillingly, to Greyfriars. But inking the handle of Harry Wharton's pen was simply idiotic, so far as Bunter could see.

Tracy certainly was on the worst of terms with the captain of the Remove—all the more so since he had been dropped from the Form football. But causing a fellow to make his fingers inky was a childish trick.

However, now that Tracy was gone, Bunter's fat mind returned to his own predicament.

He could not heave himself up at the window to play that prank with the door-key. Neither, after what Tracy had done, was Bunter anxious to get into the Form-room at all. He did not want to run any risk of being suspected of Tracy's action. With Quelch's desk in that inky state, the sooner Bunter was safe away from the spot, the healthier it was likely to be for him.

Neither, however, did he want to sit on the quad when he dropped. He was tired of sitting on the quad! What he wanted was a helping hand down.

He blinked round over a fat shoulder in the hope of seeing some fellow at hand—some fellow less playful than that cheeky young rascal Tubb.

Then he became aware that he was the cynosure of many eyes! A dozen fellows, at least, were staring at Bunter—having, chiefly, a view of extensive trousers!

Like many short-sighted people, Bunter did not realise that he was visible to persons outside his own range of vision! He had noticed nobody at hand, but Tubb of the Third, when he clambered up to the Form-room window. But farther off were a good many fellows—whom the fat Owl did not notice, but who, naturally, noticed Bunter, bunched on the window-sill.

A dozen fellows stared at him, and grinned. Three or four Removites, and some of the Fourth and the Shell, had gathered round, gazing and grinning.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "I say, you fellows—"

"What are you up to, you fat chump?" demanded Peter Todd.

"Better get down!" grinned Vernon-Smith. "Old Prout's coming along!"

"Oh crickey!" gasped Bunter.

He gave a startled blink at a portly figure rolling towards him.

Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, came frowning to the spot. Fellows, of course, were not allowed to climb in at Form-room windows! This was a serious infraction of the rules! It did not specially concern Prout, who was a senior master, and had nothing to do with Quelch's boys. Still, Bunter certainly was breaking a rule; and Prout barged in, frowning.

"Bunter! What are you doing there, Bunter?" boomed Prout.

"Oh, nothing!" gasped Bunter.

"Descend at once!" commanded Mr. Prout.

Billy Bunter would gladly have done so, but he did not want to hit the quad. Any other fellows could have dropped lightly and easily. Bunter was going to drop like a sack of coke when he dropped. Naturally, he hesitated.

"Do you hear me?" boomed Prout. "Oh! Yes!" gasped Bunter. "I—"

"Descend!"

"I—I—oh, lor'—"

Mr. Prout, frowning still more portentously, stepped to Bunter, grasped him by a fat shoulder and jerked him from the window-sill.

Bunter descended then—suddenly! He came down like a plummet, and his heel landed on Prout's toe!

Prout had not expected that! Bunter, yelling, landed on the quad, sitting down for the fourth time that morning! But Prout did not heed him further! Prout was yelling, too! Bunter's weight, dropping on his toe, seemed to have hurt that toe! Prout fairly roared.

He hopped on one leg.

"Oh!" roared Prout. "My foot! My toe! Oh! Ah! You clumsy young rascal—oh! You—you—you—oooh! Oh! Ooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Ow!" spluttered Prout, almost dancing with anguish.

"Hook it, Bunter!" gasped Smithy.

That advice was too good not to be taken! Billy Bunter scrambled up, and fed—leaving Prout still standing on one leg and booming!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Difference Of Opinion!

"MY name there?" asked Tracy with a sneer.

"No!" answered Harry Wharton curtly.

The captain of the Remove had a paper in his hand. It was a list of Remove men for the St. Jude's match, which was due on the morrow, Wednesday. That was the matter that the Famous Five had been discussing when Billy Bunter interrupted them. Oblivious of Bunter, and quite unaware of his subsequent proceedings, the chums of the Remove were still discussing that topic when Tracy came out of the House and came over to them.

There was a slight division of opinion in the Co. on that subject. Gilbert Tracy had played in one football match since he had been at Greyfriars, and he had displayed remarkable, and indeed really wonderful, form as a footballer. In all other things he was a slacker of the first water, but he seemed to be a born footballer, and there was no doubt that he was keen on the game.

Little as he liked the fellow, Wharton had welcomed him into the team with open arms, as it were. But the result had been a resolve never to play Tracy again for the Remove. He had firmly made up his mind on that point, but his friends were rather dubious about leaving out the best footballer in the Lower School—a player head and shoulders above the rest.

It was rather a worry to Wharton. He knew, and admitted, that Tracy was a better man at Soccer than he was himself. That made his action open to a good deal of criticism and misunderstanding. But a fellow who could not, or would not, play a clean game, was not wanted in a Greyfriars team, and that was that!

"You're leaving me out to-morrow?" asked Gilbert.

"To-morrow and afterwards!" answered Harry. "I'm sorry, con-

sidering your form—we'd be glad enough to have a man like you in the side against St. Jude's. But you know the reason well enough—"

"An accident in the match with the Shell—"

"Wash that out!" said Harry curtly. "You laid out Hobson of the Shell because you had a grudge against him, and were ordered off the field for foul play. You kicked him deliberately—I saw you, and the referee saw you—and five or six other fellows. That's not good enough for Greyfriars."

"Any fellow might get a hack—" muttered Tracy.

"Oh, chuck it!" said the captain of the Remove. "Do you think we can take you over to St. Jude's and risk you disgracing the team like that? We've always played a decent game, and we're going on playing one. That means that there's no room for you in the team. You'll have to learn to keep your rotten temper before you play for the Remove again."

Tracy gave him an evil look.

The fellow who had come unwillingly to Greyfriars, who loathed the school and was anxious to get away from it, had one consolation there—Soccer! And his own evil temper and utter unscrupulousness barred him from the game.

"You make out that I hacked Hobson that time because of a grudge," he said. "You can't make out that I've got any grudge against St. Jude's men—fellows I've never seen—"

"I can't trust you!" answered Wharton shortly.

"You mean that you won't put your own nose out of joint by playing a better man than yourself!" sneered Tracy. "That's the long and the short of it. You were the Big Panjandrum before I came—and you don't want to play second fiddle."

Harry Wharton's face flushed. He was aware that that view might be taken by other fellows as well as Tracy, and it was disagreeable enough. But he answered quietly.

"You can put it like that, if you like! It won't make any difference. You're not in the team."

"You mean that you're going to keep me out of Soccer, all through the term, if I stay here?" asked Tracy between his teeth.

"I mean that you're going to keep yourself out! Nobody asked you to play foul!"

"I'll make you sorry for it, if you stick to that!"

"Get on with it!" answered the captain of the Remove, contemptuously.

Tracy's eyes were gleaming, and his hands were clenched. It was plain that he could hardly restrain himself from using them on the captain of the Form. But he did restrain himself, he had tried that on before, and knew that it was futile. He could play any Remove man's head off at Soccer, but if it came to punching, there were a dozen fellows in the Form who could make rings round him, and Wharton was one of them.

He set his lips hard and turned away.

Harry Wharton shrugged his shoulders, and glanced at the list in his hand again, dismissing Tracy from his mind.

"Look here, old chap—" murmured Bob Cherry.

"I think—" began Johnny Bull. "No good talking, old beans!" said the captain of the Remove. "You didn't notice what that fellow did in the Shell match—I did! So did the referee! Ask Potter of the Fifth!"

"Well, a chap might lose his temper once, and think better of it!" said Bob

slowly. "That chap Tracy is a good bit of a worm, I know. From what I hear, he's got a soft old uncle at home, who let him do anything he jolly well liked, till he grew such a worry that the old bean had to get shut of him. That really was hardly fair on the chap. He wouldn't be here at all, if Quelch hadn't as good as lugged him here by his neck, and he'd go if he could. He's a good bit of a worm, but—"

"He's keen on footer!" said Johnny Bull.

"And he plays a wonderful game!" said Bob. "St. Jude's would sit up and take notice if they saw him with his shooting-boots on."

"That's true enough, Harry!" said Frank Nugent. "I'm keen enough to play at St. Jude's, but I'm not in the same street with Tracy."

"I'm not myself, at Soccer!" said Wharton. "I play the game well enough to know a better man when I see one. That's not the point. How would you like to hear all St. Jude's howling 'Foul' when we're playing over there to-morrow? Like to see old Lunn, or one of the others, limping off with a bandy leg, fouled by a Greyfriars man?"

"Hardly!" said Bob. "But—"
"But the butfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh. "One absurd swallow does not make an esteemed summer, as the English proverb remarkably observes."

Harry Wharton gave an impatient grunt. With his own chums arguing with him in this style, he could guess that there would be a good deal more argument from other fellows. Nevertheless, he was sure that he was right. A fellow who could not be trusted not to disgrace his side by foul play, was not a fellow to play for the school.

"Think it over, old chap!" urged Bob. "A fellow might lose his temper, and learn to keep it better. After all, old Smithy's had to be called to order more than once, for rough play."

"If it was only that—"
"Well, a lot of fellows think it was only that, and Tracy says—"

"Tracy would say anything—and I know what I saw!" snapped the captain of the Remove. "He kicked Hobby as deliberately as a fellow might kick a footer, and the chap was limping for days. If such a thing happened at St. Jude's, we should never dare show our faces there again. The fellow knows all about Soccer, but unless he learns to play the game, he can't expect to play in a decent team."

The bell for third school interrupted the discussion.

Wharton put his list into his pocket, and the juniors headed for the House. When they arrived at the door of the Remove Form Room, they were reminded of Billy Bunter and his bright idea. The key was sticking in the outside of the lock; evidently Quelch had not come back for it, neither, it was clear, had Bunter carried out that bright idea of locking the door on the inside.

But the fat Owl was grinning as he rolled up to the door. His own bright idea had not been carried out, but there was a surprise awaiting the Remove master when he looked into his desk! That amused Bunter considerably. He was quite looking forward to Quelch making that startling discovery.

Mr. Quelch arrived, and let in his Form. The Removites went to their places. Gilbert Tracy's eyes were on Harry Wharton; Bunter's on Mr. Quelch.

Third lesson was Latin prose. A pas-

sage read out in English by the Remove master had to be taken down, and then turned into Latin. Tracy's eyes glittered as Harry Wharton, like the others, picked up his pen to write.

Wharton did not look at Tracy, or think of him. He noticed, with surprise and annoyance, that there was ink on his pen-handle, still damp—that made a purple smudge on his fingers. How it had got there he did not know, unless some fellow had done it for a joke. But it was a trifling circumstance to which he gave no great attention.

He wiped the pen-handle on a fragment of blotting paper, and forgot it.

But the purple stain on his fingers remained, and had to remain till after class, when he could get to soap and water. Inky fingers were not uncommon in the lower Forms. And though Wharton was, as a rule, rather particular in such matters, it was not, of course, the first time that his fingers had been stained with ink, and he did not give it a thought.

The lesson having been taken down, Mr. Quelch went to his desk, and Billy Bunter's eyes almost bulged through his spectacles as he watched him. Quelch was sure to open that desk sooner or later during the class, and when he did there was going to be something like a thunderstorm.

Really, it was difficult for Bunter to fix his attention on his Latin paper in the thrilling circumstances. And he gasped aloud when the Remove master lifted the lid of the desk.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Clue!

MR. QUELCH started convulsively.

He gazed into his desk.
He stood gazing as if transfixed.

Perhaps he could not quite believe his eyes at what he saw.

What he saw was startling enough. There were some books, and a good many papers in the desk. Among them were a number of Form papers which Mr. Quelch had intended to correct, while the juniors were busy with Latin prose. Few of those Form papers, however, were now in a decipherable state.

Purple indelible ink, such as was used for marking linen, smothered them. The interior of the desk fairly reeked with ink.

The Remove master gazed, and gazed, dumbfounded. There had been "rags" in the Remove-room before, but never such a reckless rag as this.

Who had done this?
Some fellow who knew that his paper was in the pile there, and doubted whether it would pass muster?

Mr. Quelch did not think so. As soon as he lifted his eyes from the inky interior of the desk, he fixed them on Gilbert Tracy.

Tracy's name leaped into his mind at once.

Tracy, the boy who was unwilling to come to school at all, who had actually run away from Greyfriars, and had been brought back, who hardly made a secret of his intention to wear out his Form-master's patience, as the only means of getting away—this was Tracy's work.

Mr. Quelch did not doubt it. Some boy, at all events, had taken advantage of the fact that he had left the key in the Form-room door, or else had

clambered in at the window. It was almost certainly Tracy.

But Mr. Quelch was conscious of the fact that, whenever anything was amiss, his suspicions went automatically to the discontented, rebellious new junior. And he had to be just.

Tracy certainly looked unconscious enough at the moment. His head, like the other heads, was bent, and he was industriously at work on Latin prose. He was not looking at his Form-master—his attention seemed to be concentrated on his work.

Only one fellow, in fact, was looking at Mr. Quelch. That one was Billy Bunter. And Bunter was not merely looking at him, he was staring at him with bulging eyes.

Mr. Quelch drew a deep, deep breath. He stepped away from the inky desk, with his lips set in a tight line.

Billy Bunter almost trembled with excitement. The thunderstorm was coming now. Mr. Quelch could hardly fail to notice the excitement in the fat face of the Owl of the Remove, but he was not thinking of suspecting Bunter of such a reckless outrage as the inking of his papers. He gave Bunter no heed.

"Boys!" said Mr. Quelch, in a deep voice.

The whole Remove looked up. Quelch's tone startled them, and the expression on his speaking countenance startled them still more.

"Some boy entered this Form-room during break," said Mr. Quelch. "I command that boy to stand out before the Form!"

There was a buzz in the Remove. But no one stood out. Several glances turned on Bunter.

The Famous Five remembered his bright idea, and half a dozen other fellows had seen him bunched at the Form-room window. They wondered what Bunter might have been up to.

Mr. Quelch waited a moment or two. But he hardly expected the delinquent to step out. What awaited that delinquent, if discovered, was not attractive.

"My desk," said the Remove master, "has been drenched in ink! This must have been done during break. It was left in order at the end of second school. Who has done this?"

No reply.
"The boy who has done this," continued Mr. Quelch, "will be given the most severe punishment. It is some boy here present!"

His eyes turned on Tracy again. But Gilbert's face was expressionless. Mr. Quelch waited another moment or two.

"Very well," he said, compressing his lips. "I shall now proceed to make an investigation. Every boy will hold his hands above his head, and I shall require any boy whose fingers are stained to explain."

"Oh crikey!" ejaculated Bunter involuntarily.

Bunter's fingers, as usual, were stained with ink. Seldom did Bunter handle a pen for more than sixty seconds without inking his fat fingers.

Other fellows simply stared.

If Quelch fancied that he was going to detect the culprit by such easy means as that, he had no chance whatever, so far as the Removites could see. Billy Bunter's were not the only stained fingers in the class—by a good many.

It was quite likely, of course, that the fellow who had splashed ink into the Form-master's desk might have stained his fingers. But Quelch had,



Bunter descended from the window like a plummet, and his heel landed on Prout's toe. "Oh!" roared the master of the Fifth, hopping on one leg. "My toe! Oh! Ah! You clumsy rascal—oooooh!"

at least, a dozen inky paws to choose from. Bunter's the inkiest.

So the juniors were surprised, and some of them amused as they put up their hands for inspection. Fellows who had inky stains on their fingers did not feel unduly alarmed, as they knew that there were a good many others to keep them company.

But Quelch knew what he was about. The ink in his desk was not the ordinary school ink. It was a purple marking-ink—quite distinct from common black ink. It was a special sort of stain that Quelch was going to look for, and, if found, it could be found only on the fellow who had handled marking-ink.

Only Billy Bunter looked alarmed. His fat fingers were excessively inky, and it did not occur to his fat brain that quite a lot of other fingers in the Form were probably in more or less the same state.

Wildly and hurriedly, Bunter wiped his fingers on his trousers—a proceeding, naturally, that drew Mr. Quelch's eyes at once.

"Bunter!"

"Oh, yes, sir—I mean, no, sir!" gasped Bunter. "It wasn't me, sir!"

"Why are you wiping your hands, Bunter?"

"I wasn't, sir!"

"What?"

"I—I mean, they—they ain't inky, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I mean, I—I got some ink on them in second school, sir, and I was going to wash them, only I never had time, and then I got some more just now, and—"

"Hold up your hands at once, Bunter!"

"Oh lor'!"

Reluctantly Billy Bunter held up a pair of fat paws, badly in need of washing, not only on account of the ink.

He blinked in terror at his Form-

master as Quelch inspected them. If Quelch was going to rely on ink as evidence, there was enough ink on Bunter's fat paws to condemn him utterly.

To his surprise and relief, Quelch, after a glance at those inky fat paws, seemed satisfied.

Leaving the fat Owl gurgling with relief, he stepped to Tracy.

All eyes in the Remove were on him and the new junior. All the fellows knew what was in his mind. Gilbert's feud with his Form-master was known to all the Form. But if Tracy was the culprit in this case, he was not likely to have been careless about it—careless enough to keep clues about him. Any other fellow might have been careless, but not the fellow who knew that Quelch would suspect him as a matter of course.

Tracy's hands easily passed muster. There was no trace on them, either of the school ink, or any other ink.

Mr. Quelch gave him a long, hard look. His glasses passed from Tracy's hands to his sleeves, and then to his garments generally. One spot of that telltale purple ink would have been enough.

But there was no such spot to be discerned. Mr. Quelch turned away from him, a little relieved in his mind. Although he suspected Tracy, as a matter of course, he was by no means eager to find him guilty—indeed, he hoped every day to see signs of amendment in that sulky, sullen boy, who was at Greyfriars on his responsibility. If Tracy was innocent of this, it was, little as Gilbert guessed it, a relief to Quelch.

He passed on, inspecting other hands. Skinner had a spasm of uneasiness under the searching, gimlet-eye. His fingers were rather inky—Skinner was a slovenly fellow. And he was well known to be rather a malicious practical

joker—quite capable of inking Quelch's papers, if he found the nerve to do it.

But Quelch passed Skinner, after a careful inspection. Other fellows had ink-stained fingers—Bolsover major, Kipps, Wibley, Hazeldene, Vivian, and two or three more. There was another pause as Quelch looked at the Bounder's hands—Smithy's ragging propensities were well known. But he passed on; and some of the fellows winked at one another, behind his majestic back. So far as they could see, Quelch was simply wasting his time. Wharton was the last.—and Mr. Quelch gave his lifted hands only a cursory glance—he did not dream of suspecting his head boy of such an outrage.

But that cursory glance became suddenly fixed. The change in Quelch's look drew the general attention.

"Wharton!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir!" said Harry, in surprise.

"Your fingers are stained—"

"Yes, sir."

"You!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Wharton! Is it possible—am I to believe—upon my word!"

Harry Wharton stared at him, in sheer wonder.

"I've got a little ink on my finger, sir!" he said blankly. "So have a dozen other fellows."

"Stand out before the Form, Wharton!"

There was a buzz in the Remove as Wharton stepped out. Quelch, evidently, had got his man; and it was his head boy, the captain of the Form.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Prout Butts In!

HARRY WHARTON stood facing his Form-master.

His face expressed only surprise—with a spot of annoyance.

He could see that Quelch

suspected him, but he could not begin to guess why. There was an inky stain on his fingers, certainly, from the smudge on his penhandle; but a dozen other hands had shown stains of ink and had been passed by.

It was not agreeable to be called out before the Form as a culprit, like this, and though his manner was respectful, his eyes were glinting.

All other eyes in the Remove were fixed on him. There was a breathless silence—broken by a stage whisper from Billy Bunter.

"I say, you fellows, it was Wharton—fancy Wharton—"

"Shut up, you fat ass!" hissed Bob Cherry.

"But Quelch has got him, so he knows—"

"Silence in the class!" rapped Mr. Quelch. "Wharton! Was it you who entered this Form-room during break and spilled a large quantity of ink over the papers in my desk?"

"No, sir!"

"Then how do you account for that stain on your fingers?" demanded Mr. Quelch sternly.

"There was some ink on my penhandle, and it smudged my finger when I began to use the pen, sir!"

"Wharton!"

"I don't understand you, sir!" exclaimed Harry. "A dozen other fellows—"

"Listen to me!" said Mr. Quelch, in a grinding voice. "The ink used on my desk is of a peculiar kind! It is a purple marking-ink! It is for a stain of purple ink that I have been looking—and I have found it."

"Oh!" gasped Harry.

And the Remove gasped, too! They understood now that Quelch had not been wasting his time on a wild-goose chase. It was not an ordinary ink-stain he had been looking for—of which there were plenty to meet his eyes! It was a special kind of stain, easily recognised and identified. Purple ink had drenched his desk—a purple stain was the clue he had been seeking; and he had found it on the fingers of his head boy.

"A downy old bird!" whispered the Bounder to Tom Redwing.

"It can't have been Wharton!" whispered Redwing. "He wouldn't—"

The Bounder chuckled.

"Fathead, of course it was! He's been handling purple marking-ink, anyhow, since his last wash! What an ass! He might have guessed that Quelch would think of looking for a clue like this—"

"Silence!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, his gimlet-eyes gleaming round. "Will you be silent in the Form? Wharton, what have you to say?"

"Only what I've said already, sir!" answered Harry. "I never came into the Form-room in break, and I know nothing of what may have been done to your desk."

"You have a purple stain on your fingers! I thought it probable that the unscrupulous boy who poured ink into my desk might have some such stain left about him; though you are the last boy in the Form of whom I should have thought in such a connection."

"I've told you how the stain came on my fingers, sir! There was a smudge on my pen—"

"Give me the pen!"

Wharton, with set lips, handed the pen over to his Form-master.

The gimlet-eyes scanned it keenly. But as it had been carefully wiped on blotting-paper, no smudge of purple, of course, remained on it. There was

nothing to bear out Wharton's statement.

Not that the statement in itself was worth much, for such a stain on the penhandle might as easily have come from the fingers to the pen, as from the pen to the fingers. However, there was nothing.

Mr. Quelch laid down the pen again, and stood looking at his head boy.

There was a breathless silence in the Form.

The Remove master had found the clue he had hoped to find. Had he found it on Tracy, he would have adjudged Tracy guilty. He knew that, and all the Form knew it. He had found it on Harry Wharton! How could he avoid adjudging him guilty? He could not have two weights and two measures in dealing with his Form!

In all the Remove there was no doubt—with two exceptions! Tracy, of course, knew the facts! And slowly it was dawning on Billy Bunter's obtuse brain why the young rascal had stained Wharton's penhandle with the same ink that he had used in Quelch's desk! Remembering what he had witnessed from the Form-room windows, in break, Bunter began to understand.

But the fat Owl's podgy intellect moved slowly, and he had not yet quite assimilated how the matter stood when there came a knock at the Form-room door.

It opened to admit the portly figure of Mr. Prout.

Mr. Quelch glanced round impatiently. Even in his leisure hours, he did not enjoy Prout's ponderous company; and in class, such an interruption was irritating; especially at a moment when there was trouble brewing in the Remove.

Why Prout was there at all mystified him and the Remove. Prout should have been in his own Form-room with the Fifth. He was keeping the Fifth waiting while he paid this visit to the Remove-room.

Prout was limping a little as he entered. There was a corn on the toe Bunter had dropped on, and it was giving Prout painful twinges. Prout had been resting that painful toe, in his study, and he was late for class.

"Mr. Prout—what—" began the Remove master, far from pleasantly.

"There is a matter, sir, that I must bring to your knowledge!" boomed Prout. "If anything has occurred in this Form-room, sir, during break, I can name the culprit!"

The whole Remove jumped. Gilbert Tracy caught his breath. He was certain, he had been certain, that no one had been about when he crept into the Form-room and out again. But if Prout had seen him—

"Indeed, sir!" said Mr. Quelch, more cordially. "I am glad to hear you say so, Mr. Prout! The fact is that something has occurred here—"

"I thought so, sir!" boomed Prout. "I certainly thought so! A boy would not enter a Form-room surreptitiously, by the window, unless intending to play some prank, sir. I was sure of it."

Mr. Quelch's eyes gleamed. So far, he had proof that his head boy had perpetrated that inky outrage—but he doubted the proof—he could not help doubting it, and yet he felt that he had to act on it. In that uncomfortable state of affairs, an eye-witness came like a windfall.

"You actually saw a boy entering this Form-room by the window, Mr. Prout?" he exclaimed.

"I did, sir!"

"During break?"

"During break, sir!"

"A Remove boy?"

"Certainly a Remove boy!"

"His name?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Bunter!" said Mr. Prout.

"Oh crikey!" came a squeak from the Remove.

"I saw the boy, sir, from a distance," said Mr. Prout. "Whether he was climbing in or climbing out when I saw him, I could not undertake to say. But if anything is amiss in this Form-room, sir, there is no doubt on the subject! I saw him holding on to the window-sill—and he dropped on my foot, sir, when I compelled him to descend, causing me very severe pain. It was Bunter!"

"Oh lor!"

"I felt it my duty, sir, to acquaint you with these facts—"

"I am very much obliged to you, Mr. Prout!"

"Not at all, sir!" boomed Prout.

And the Fifth Form master, with a grim look at Billy Bunter, limped out, and the Form-room door closed on him.

Mr. Quelch drew a deep, deep breath.

"Wharton," he said, "it is extraordinary that your fingers should bear a stain of ink similar to that poured into my desk. It is very extraordinary indeed! But as Bunter was actually seen entering the Form-room during break, you are exonerated. You may go back to your place."

Wharton went silently back to his place.

Mr. Quelch picked up a cane from his desk. His gimlet-eyes fixed on the quaking Owl of the Remove—and the glint in those gimlet-eyes sent cold chills running down Billy Bunter's fat back.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Benefit Of The Doubt!

"BUNTER!"

"Oh crikey!"

"Stand out, Bunter!"

"It—it wasn't me, sir!"

gasped Bunter "I—I never—"

"Stand out at once!"

Billy Bunter rolled dismally out before the Form. The general attention was now transferred from Harry Wharton to the fat Owl of the Remove.

Up to the moment when Mr. Prout had butted in, few fellows had doubted that Quelch had the right man—the clue of the purple ink seemed to them unmistakable. But Quelch was now on a new trail, and the Remove wondered whether the delinquent was, after all, the fat and fatuous Owl.

Quelch seemed to have no doubt. He gripped his cane hard, his eyes glinting under knitted brows.

"Bunter, you entered the Form-room during break! You—"

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I didn't, sir! I—I never thought of such a thing, sir! Never crossed my mind for a moment! I—I never noticed that you left the key in the Form-room door, sir, and never told anybody! You can ask Wharton, sir. He will remember what I said."

"You entered the Form-room by the window, Bunter—"

"Oh, no, sir! I never—"

"You have heard Mr. Prout's statement, Bunter! Do you venture to cast doubt upon it?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, no!" gasped Bunter. "But old Prout—I mean, Mr. Prout—was mistaken, sir! I wasn't at the Form-room window when he saw me there, sir! You can ask Smithy, sir—he saw me, too—"

"Upon my word!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch, gazing at Bunter.

"I never went near the Form-room window, sir! I—I wouldn't!" groaned Bunter. "Besides, I never got in! I couldn't! That cheeky little beast Tubbs said he would bunk me up, and he hiked off and left me hanging on the sill—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Silence! You were seen climbing in at the window, Bunter! Someone entered the Form-room during break and poured ink into my desk. As you were seen entering surreptitiously at the window—"

"I wasn't!" yelled Bunter in terror. "I couldn't get in, sir! Young Tubbs left me sticking on the window-sill, and I couldn't get any farther—"

"You have stated that you were nowhere near the Form-room window, Bunter!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir! I—I wasn't! I was in the gym at the time—"

"I will listen to no more of these palpable fabrications, Bunter!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "I shall now—"

"But it wasn't me, sir!" shrieked Bunter. "I never thought of pouring ink into your desk, sir! I was only going to lock the Form-room door, sir, if I got in—just for a—a—a lark, sir—"

"Upon my word! You—"

"It—it was only a jig-jig-jog-joke!" stuttered the fat Owl. "I—I thought it would—would amuse you, sir—"

"Bunter, you—"

"But I never got in, and never did it, sir! I couldn't climb in, sir! I hadn't got in when old Prout—when Mr. Prout saw me, sir! Besides, I wasn't there at all—"

"You were not there at all!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"No, sir! I was in the tuck-shop!" Mr. Quelch gripped his cane almost convulsively.

The Remove gazed at Billy Bunter.

"I wasn't there, really, sir!" groaned Bunter. "I—I hope you can take my word, sir—"

"Take your word!" repeated Mr. Quelch, almost dazedly.

"Yes, sir! I wasn't there, sir! I—I think Mr. Prout must have fancied it, sir! Old people do fancy things, you know, sir. Mr. Prout's jolly old, sir! He—he must be as old as you, sir, so—"

"Silence!" roared Mr. Quelch.

"Bunter—"

"But I wasn't there, sir, when Mr. Prout saw me—I was in the House, looking for letters—you can ask any of the fellows, sir, and they will tell you that I was expecting a postal order—they all know—"

"I will hear no more, Bunter! I shall administer the most severe—Bend over that desk, Bunter!"

"But I didn't!" shrieked Bunter. "I wasn't! I never—" In sheer desperation Bunter turned his spectacles on Gilbert Tracy, who was staring at him from his place in the Form. "Tracy, you beast, you tell him! I ain't going to be whopped for what you did?"

Sensation! Gilbert Tracy's face turned almost green.

His cunning scheme had already gone awry; Wharton had escaped the trap laid for him, and the vials of wrath were turned on Billy Bunter's fat head! But Tracy had not expected, so far, anything worse than that! Bunter's frantic yell took him quite by surprise.

It was his first intimation that Bunter knew what he had done, and he could not guess how Bunter knew. It had not occurred to him that Bunter's antics outside the Form-room window had

synchronised with his own performances within!

The Remove, as one man, turned their heads to stare at Tracy. Mr. Quelch shot him a sharp glance, and then glared at Bunter again. Bunter was shaking a fat fist at the new junior.

"Own up, you rotter!" he bawled. "Sticking there and letting Quelch think it was me! Just like you did before, you beast, when you sneaked a paper from his study! You jolly well know that it wasn't me when you did it!"

"Bunter!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Explain yourself at once! Do you mean to say that Tracy was in the Form-room when you entered by the window?"

"I never got in!" howled Bunter. "I saw him from the window—he never saw me there, but I saw him all right! I ain't going to be whopped because he won't own up!"

"Tracy," thundered Mr. Quelch, "were you in the Form-room?"

Gilbert set his lips.

"No!" he answered.

"Oh, you awful fibber!" gasped Bunter. "Fancy a fellow telling whoppers like that! Oh crumbs!"

"Bunter, if you state that you saw Tracy here—"

"He knows he was here!" howled Bunter. "I jolly well saw him from the window—pouring the ink into the desk, and then smudging it on Wharton's pen-handle—"

"What?" shrieked Mr. Quelch.

"Oh!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"I jolly well saw him, and I ain't going to be whopped for what he did!" gasped Bunter. "Why should I? Any fellow would own up, except that cad! I jolly well know now why he smudged the ink on Wharton's pen, too! He wanted to make out that it was Wharton—I can jolly well see that now! I thought he must be batty when he did it—but I can jolly well see now!"

"Oh gad!" murmured the Bounder, staring at Tracy.

Mr. Quelch's face was a study.

"I never did it, sir!" wailed Bunter.

"I—I wouldn't! I shouldn't jolly well dare to! Oh lor'!"

"You may be silent, Bunter! Tracy, you have heard Bunter's statement! What have you to say?"

Gilbert pulled himself together.

"Is it necessary for me to say anything, sir?" he asked coolly. "Bunter has been telling lies ever since you

(Continued on next page.)

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called him out. That's one more! I suppose he would say anything to get out of a whopping."

"Oh, you beast!"

"Silence, Bunter!"

"But I ain't going to have him making out that I tell lies, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I never have, sir—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!"

"But I never have, sir! I—I wouldn't! I mean to say, you know I wouldn't tell whoppers, sir! I—I couldn't, sir, like—like Pontius Pilate with his little axe, sir—"

"Will you be silent, Bunter! Boys, this is not a laughing matter! Silence in the Form!"

There was silence—breathless silence. Mr. Quelch stood looking at Tracy, who faced him calmly.

Bunter, it was true, had rolled out a series of the most remarkable and fat-headed "whoppers" since he had been called out. But that he was telling the truth now, Quelch had no doubt—and few of the Remove had.

The ragger was, after all, Tracy, as Quelch had first suspected. The purple stain on Harry Wharton's fingers was explained, if Tracy had deliberately smeared his pen-handle with the marking-ink—foreseeing the line that Quelch's investigation was very likely to take!

But it was word against word—Tracy's word against Bunter's.

Quelch did not trust Tracy an inch; but to condemn him on the evidence of a fellow who, only a minute ago, had been uttering a string of palpable untruths, was scarcely possible.

It was plain that Bunter was prepared to say anything, or almost anything, to get out of a whopping. It was certain that Bunter had been seen climbing the Form-room window, whether he had entered or not. But there was no evidence against Tracy—except Bunter's word, which was worth nothing. The fact that Quelch, in this instance, believed him did not make it any the less worthless.

The silence was long.

Quelch was in a difficult position—not

for the first time, since he had had to deal with that unusual and remarkable new boy! Wharton, in Quelch's opinion, was cleared—Bunter was guiltless; yet to punish Tracy on the word of a reckless and fatuous fibber like Bunter was hardly to be thought of. Yet to leave the perpetrator of that inky outrage unpunished was a bitter pill to swallow.

The Remove fellows waited in tense excitement for Quelch to speak again. He spoke at last:

"Bunter! Go back to your place!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter.

He rolled back to his place in great relief. He, at least, was safely out of it!

Mr. Quelch breathed hard, and he breathed deep.

"I shall consider this matter further, and make further investigations!" he said. "We shall now proceed!"

And the Remove proceeded.

All the juniors knew what it meant. Quelch knew who the culprit was, but there was a doubt in the matter, and Tracy had to have the benefit of it.

Quelch had been beaten by the member of his Form who had the unexampled impudence and audacity to declare war on his Form-master. Gilbert was getting on with his campaign to make Quelch tired of keeping him at Greyfriars—and he was getting on with it with impunity.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Gilbert Hits Back!

"NO!" snapped Harry Wharton.

It was the following day, after morning class.

The afternoon was a half-holiday, and the Remove footballers were booked for a visit to St. Jude's. The list had been posted up in the Rag the day before—and it did not include the name of the fellow who was admitted, on all hands, to be the best footballer in the Lower School at Greyfriars.

Plenty of fellows in the Form shook their heads over it. Few, if any, liked

Tracy; but Soccer was Soccer. Some doubted whether that foul in the match with the Shell had really been so deliberate and intentional as Wharton believed. Anyhow, it seemed to many of the fellows that exclusion from the Form game was hard measure for a single offence.

Wharton's own friends were dubious—other fellows openly critical—and some, like Skinner and his pals, took the view that jealousy of the new fellow's form was at the bottom of it. Some of the footballers were debating bringing pressure to bear on the captain of the Remove before the team started for St. Jude's.

Perhaps Tracy expected the football captain to give in to the weight of public opinion in the Remove. Fellows who liked him least were keen to see him shooting some of his wonderful goals at St. Jude's. He came up to the captain of the Remove when the Form came out after class on Wednesday morning and put the question again. Wharton's answer was short and sharp.

"You mean that?" asked Tracy.

"I mean that I'd just as soon play an adder as a fellow like you!" said Harry Wharton. "You make me feel sick. Leave me alone!"

"And all because a fellow can shoot goals!" said Tracy. "You're setting yourself up against the whole Form!"

"You rotter!" said Harry. "You'd better keep your distance from me! I've said nothing about what happened in the Form-room yesterday. But do you think I don't know who it was? It's not the first time you've played a dirty trick, to land me in a row with Quelch!"

Gilbert Tracy shrugged his shoulders.

"I've said that that fat fool, Bunter, was lying from start to finish!" he drawled.

"You can say what you like!" retorted the captain of the Remove contemptuously. "But I don't believe a word you say. Quelch had to let you off—but he knows what you did well enough—and so do I!"

"Have it your own way!" sneered Tracy. "But that's got nothing to do with Soccer, anyway. I've heard you say that personal rows ought to be kept outside games! Forgotten that?"

"A snake in the grass isn't wanted in the Remove team!"

Tracy's face flushed.

"You're calling me some pretty names!" he said, between his teeth.

"I'm calling you exactly what you are!" Wharton's eyes gleamed. "Yesterday, at the very time my friends were jawing me for leaving you out of the eleven, you were sneaking into the Form-room to play that trick on Quelch, and to fix it on me—as foul a trick as a rotten cad ever played! Do you think, after that, I'd trust you in Soccer, or anything else?"

"Cut short the sermon!" drawled Tracy. "Look here! Do I play at St. Jude's this afternoon, or not?"

"Not!" answered Harry Wharton tersely. "You won't play for the Remove at all—I wouldn't put you in the team to play young Tubb's scrubby crowd next Saturday. I wouldn't touch you with a barge-pole! Keep your distance!"

"You'll be sorry—" muttered Tracy. "I've heard that before, and don't want to hear it again!" And the captain of the Remove cut short the discussion by turning his back on Gilbert and walking away.

Tracy cast a bitter look after him. It was to his credit that he wished to play in a strenuous Soccer match that

**ALL OUT
FOR ANOTHER RECORD**



This year's grand new issue of MODERN BOY'S ANNUAL is a winner from the start. Monster air-liners, streamlined trains, the countless wonders of the modern age—crowd its pages in a fascinating pageant of progress. Every up-to-date boy needs this thrillingly up-to-date book.

**Modern
Boy's ANNUAL**

ON SALE AT ALL NEWSAGENTS AND BOOKSTALLS

6

afternoon instead of slacking about the quad, frowsting in a study, or breaking bounds in dubious quarters. But he had "dished" himself, and he drew little consolation from the knowledge that the fault was his own. The fact that the Remove footballers were dissatisfied with their skipper's decision was some consolation, but not much.

Tracy found more consolation in the vengeful thoughts that filled his mind as he loafed in the quad till the dinner-bell rang.

After dinner, he walked down to the bike-shed.

He had made up his mind what he was going to do—and now he was going to do it! Remove fellows who saw him in the quad would have been startled if they could have guessed his thoughts. But no Remove man was likely to guess them.

He passed a group of Remove fellows—discussing rather excitedly the proposition of putting it up to Wharton, and making him somehow change his mind. Tracy passed them unheeding; he had no expectation that the captain of the Remove would change his mind after what he had said on the subject.

He went into the bike-shed and wheeled out his machine. He rode away at a rapid pace for Courtfield by the road over the common. What he had to do had to be done before the Remove footballers started for St. Jude's.

He reached Courtfield in a very short time, and dismounted in the High Street at the post office.

For a minute he stood outside that building, glancing up and down the street to make sure that no Greyfriars fellows were in the offing. Then he went in.

Any Remove fellow who had heard him at the telephone a few minutes later would have been surprised to hear him ring up Mr. Quelch's number at the school.

There was a sour grin on Gilbert's face, as he heard the voice of his Form-master answering over the wires.

Mr. Quelch, certainly, was not likely to suspect that it was Tracy of his Form who had rung him up; and Gilbert, when he spoke, was very careful to disguise his voice, speaking in husky tones, like a fellow with a cold.

"Mr. Quelch—
"Speaking!"

"I'm sorry to bother you, sir—Lunn, of the Fourth Form at St. Jude's, speaking from the school." The husky voice on the telephone had no resemblance to Gilbert Tracy's usual sharp, clear tones.

"Lunn!" repeated Mr. Quelch from his study at Greyfriars. "Lunn? Yes—and what—"

"I dare say you know, sir, that Wharton's team is—or rather was—coming over to play us this afternoon," went on Tracy coolly. "If you would be so kind as to tell Wharton—"

"What?"

That monosyllable came like a bark. Apparently Mr. Quelch was not pleased by being rung up and given a message for a junior in his Form.

"It's rather serious, sir. There is an outbreak of measles in the school—"

"Oh!"

"Wharton's team is—or was—coming over to play us to-day—"

"Oh!" repeated Mr. Quelch.

"Our headmaster thinks, sir, that the match ought to be cancelled, with measles in the place—"

"I should certainly think so!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Undoubtedly the match must be cancelled! Most

decidedly! It would be the height of folly to run the risk of infection."

Mr. Quelch's tone was very emphatic. Tracy grinned. Obviously there was not the slightest doubt at Quelch's end of the wire.

"If you'd tell Wharton, sir, and tell him how sorry we are—"

"Certainly—certainly! I will notify him immediately! Your name is—what did you say your name was?"

"Lunn, sir; junior captain here."

"Very well, I will see that Wharton has your message, Lunn!"

"Thank you, sir!"

Gilbert grinned as he went back to his bike. He was not playing Soccer that afternoon; neither were Harry Wharton & Co now. The young rascal was in quite a cheery mood as he remounted his bike and pedalled away, his spin that afternoon terminating at the Three Fishers, where cigarettes and billiards filled in the rest of the afternoon in a manner quite to his taste!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Washed Out!

"LOOK here—"

"Talk sense!"
"Come down off the high horse!"

"Think of the game!"

"And don't be a goat!"

Quite a number of Remove fellows were talking at once.

Harry Wharton was listening to them with a grim expression on his face.

The Co. stood silent. In point of fact, Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull, Frank Nugent and Hurree Janset Ram Singh, were in agreement with the rest. Harry Wharton seemed to stand alone in his fixed opinion. Alone as he was in holding it, he did not seem disposed to change it.

It was not yet time to start for St. Jude's, but it was getting near time. The footballing fraternity had cornered Wharton in the Rag, and were putting it to him plainly—very plainly.

Vernon-Smith was the loudest and most emphatic. But he was backed up by Squiff, Tom Brown, Peter Todd, Mark Linley, and the rest—as well as a crowd of fellows who were not in the eleven, but keen, all the same, on seeing the team make hay of St. Jude's.

"You can jolly well see that we all think alike!" exclaimed the Bounder angrily. "Are you going to set up as a dictator?"

"I'm not setting up as anything in particular," said Harry Wharton mildly. "The Remove set me up as skipper, and they can push me out again as soon as they please. I shan't grouse if they do."

"Oh, chuck that!" exclaimed Tom Brown. "Nobody wants that. We want the best junior footballer at Greyfriars in the team."

"You want the fellow who fouled Hobson of the Shell, and was turned off the field for foul play?" asked Harry.

"Oh, get away from that!" said Vernon-Smith. "Putting it at the very worst, it happened once, and I don't see barring a fellow from Soccer all through the season for one slip."

"Altogether too thick, even if what Tracy did was as bad as you think," said Peter Todd. "He's had a lesson and a warning. He was new here, too, and goodness knows what he was used to; but here—"

"If he had a grudge against old Hobby, he's not got any grudges against St. Jude's men," said the Bounder. "It

(Continued on next page.)

A Trip Round a Fireworks Factory!

MANY of our readers will be interested in fireworks at this time of the year, so we are taking you on an excursion round the factory of Messrs. James Pain & Sons, Ltd. who make the well-known "Pain's Fireworks."

We enter by the main gates, hand over our matches, and then proceed to a long room in which paper cases of all sizes and shapes are being rolled by hand, to contain the firework compositions.

Next we come to the "danger" buildings in which the work of "charging" and "finishing" the cases with explosive compositions is performed, and in which are stored the finished or partly finished fireworks. The danger buildings are quite small, consisting of not more than two compartments with a few workers in each. These buildings are separated from each other and screened by corrugated iron screens. Raised wooden plank tracks connect the buildings, and those working in them wear rubber shoes and special serge clothing with no pockets. Separate buildings are usually used for charging operations, i.e. the filling of the case, and finishing the filled cases which consists of covering them up to make them look attractive.

Let us look into a few of the "shops" as they are called. In one you will see burly men pounding rocket composition into large rockets with mallets, in another, a finishing shop this time, a girl is tacking the cardboard wings on to Schneider Planes, to balance them as they rise. In the next shop we see Roman Candles being charged with grain scooped in below each star to drive it into the air.

The "Cracker" shop is always a very interesting one. Here you can watch the cracker being filled, bent, tied, and bundled. In the "wheel" shop they are winding "Coloured Wheels" round a cardboard centre, and then touching the last coil with hot sealing wax to prevent it unravelling.

Next is a shop in which they are "funnelling up" small fireworks such as Dizzle Dazzles, Silver Rains, and Amber Electrolytes. Here the women hold funnels filled with composition above the case, and move a wire up and down through the funnel into the case, which draws down the composition and firms it into the case at the same time.

An elaborate system of fire hydrants covers the whole factory and there is also a special Fire Brigade Squad who reckon on being able to get the hoses playing on to a building in under two minutes.

We hope that you have enjoyed your lightning trip and will enjoy still more your display on November 5th.

won't happen there, and if it ain't going to happen, what's the trouble?"

"It might," said Harry. "I don't trust that cad an inch!"

"Oh rot!"

"Bosh!"

"Talk sense!"

"Your own pals are against you in this!" exclaimed the Bounder hotly. "Every man here is down on you."

The Co. were still silent. They would not join in this heckling of their leader, but it was clear that silence gave consent.

Harry Wharton looked round and read it in all faces—every man there was against him.

"We know you bar the chap," Smithy went on, "and we know you've got reason. There never was such a toad in the Remove. But Soccer's Soccer. If he had the cheek to stick his nose into my study, I'd punch it! But I want him in the team. What's the good of making out that he isn't the very best man we've got?"

"I'm not making it out. I know he's the best man we've got—if he chooses to play a clean game; but he doesn't."

"If you mean that you're going to be an obstinate fool—"

"I hope not," said Harry quietly. "If every man here is against me I shall give in—thinking all the time that I am right, and that you fellows are wrong. I can't and don't trust that rotter; but if every man here wants him in the eleven, let it go at that. If he disgraces us at St. Jude's—"

"Oh, that's rot!"

"I don't think it's rot—I think it's very likely! But have it as you like, I give in, and he plays. You'll have to stand out, Frank."

Nugent smiled.

"I don't mind that, old chap. I've said that I think Tracy ought to be in the eleven, and that means that I don't get a place. I'm satisfied."

"I'm not," said Harry. "But I'm not setting up as a dictator, as Smithy so tactfully puts it. I give in to the team, and I think the team will be sorry for it."

There was a general clearing of faces in the Rag.

Wharton had given in, after all, against his better judgment. But he was not the fellow to be sulky about it; he was the fellow to make the best of it. If it turned out that Tracy had learned his lesson and changed his ways, no one would be better pleased than the captain of the Remove. He did not think so, but he was prepared to hope so.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Quelch!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as a figure in cap and gown appeared in the open doorway of the Rag.

Mr. Quelch glanced over the crowd of Removites.

"Is Wharton here?" he asked.

"Yes, sir!" Harry Wharton stepped towards the door.

"I have had a telephone call from St. Jude's School, Wharton—from a boy named Lunn," said Mr. Quelch. "He states that there is an outbreak of measles at the school—"

"Oh!"

"His headmaster thinks, and I most emphatically agree, that visits to the school should be cancelled," said Mr. Quelch. "He has asked me to express his regret that the match cannot be played to-day, Wharton."

"Oh!"

"I am sorry, my boys," said the Remove master, as he read the dismay in many faces. "But I must impress upon you that St. Jude's is, for the

present, strictly out of bounds for all Greyfriars boys."

"Very well, sir," said Harry

The Remove master rustled away. He left clouded faces behind him. No one, perhaps, was keen to pick up the merry measles microbe, but the scratching of the football match, almost at the last moment, was a blow.

"Well, what rotten luck!" said Squiff, the Remove goalkeeper. "Now we've talked Wharton round, and got Tracy in the team, there's no match after all!"

"The rottenfulness is terrific!" said Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"Putrid luck!" groaned Bob Cherry.

"Absolutely putrid!" growled the Bounder. "What did the silly idiots want to go and catch measles for?"

"I don't suppose they did it on purpose!" grinned Bob.

"Blow them!" granted Smithy.

Harry Wharton smiled faintly. He was disappointed, like the rest; but he had at least one consolation which the other fellows had not—he was not going to play Tracy at St. Jude's after all. Smithy did not smile; he scowled.

"No good wasting the afternoon," he said. "We'll fix up a pick-up game here—"

"And get in form for a terrific battle with the Third on Saturday," remarked Bob Cherry. "I hear that young Tubb has been telling his friends that they're going to beat the Remove."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

COLONIAL READERS PLEASE NOTE!

The Result of the Overseas Section
of Our "Armaments" Contest No. 1
will appear in

NEXT WEEK'S MAGNET!

"And we'll have Tracy in the pick-up," said the Bounder quickly, with a glance at the captain of the Remove.

Harry Wharton opened his lips and shut them again. As he had agreed to play Tracy at St. Jude's, he could hardly refuse to play him in a pick-up game on the Greyfriars ground. He did not speak.

"Where is the fellow?" asked Peter Todd. "He's not here."

"He's somewhere about," answered Vernon-Smith. "I'll find him all right—if he's going to play. What about it, Wharton?"

"Please yourself!" said Harry. "As St. Jude's is off, I think I'll get out on my jigger. You fix up a pick-up, Smithy."

"I shall jolly well play Tracy, if I do," snapped Smithy.

"Go ahead!"

"Look here—" said Bob Cherry doubtfully.

"Every chap can please himself," said Harry. "St. Jude's is washed out—and that's that! I'd like to run across to Highcliffe—we haven't seen Courtenay and the old Caterpillar this term yet."

"Oh, all right!" agreed Bob.

Some of the fellows headed for the changing-room. The Famous Five went for their bicycles. Vernon-Smith went to look for Tracy.

Tracy, however, was not to be found. After searching for him for about ten minutes, the Bounder looked in the bike-shed, and found that his machine was gone. It was clear that he had gone out, and the pick-up game had to be played without him, after all. And not one of the Remove fellows dreamed that, at St. Jude's, Lunn and his men were wondering, with growing irritation, why they did not turn up.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Spoofted!

B UZZZZZZ!

Mr. Quelch laid down his pen, frowned slightly, and reached for the receiver.

That afternoon was a half-holiday to the Remove—but not quite so to their Form-master.

Quelch had a pile of about thirty Latin prosos to look over, and he was busy with the same when the telephone-bell rang again.

"Is that Greyfriars—" came a boyish voice.

"Yes! What—"

"Mr. Quelch?"

"Yes, yes! What—"

"Lunn speaking from St. Jude's, sir—Lunn, junior captain here, sir! Awfully sorry to bother you, sir, but—"

"What is it this time?" asked Mr. Quelch, naturally under the impression that this was the second time that Lunn had rung him up that afternoon, though the voice on the phone was no longer lunky.

"Eh? Sorry to bother you, sir, but I thought I'd better phone—I suppose you know sir, that we're expecting a Greyfriars team over here this afternoon—"

"What?"

"The Remove team, sir—kick-off was fixed for a quarter of an hour ago, but they haven't turned up—so I thought I'd phone and ask if there was anything the matter—"

"Wha-a-t?"

"I'm sure you'll excuse me for disturbing you, in the circumstances, sir! We expected Wharton and his men—"

"I fail to understand you, Lunn! What do you mean?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch testily. "Less than an hour ago you telephoned me—"

"What?"

"To cancel the football match—"

"Eh?"

"I passed on your message to Wharton! And—"

"I don't catch on, sir! I haven't telephoned you—," gasped the astonished junior captain of St. Jude's, at the other end.

"You have not!" stammered Mr. Quelch.

"No, sir—there is some mistake—"

"How can there be a mistake?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Your name is Lunn, is it not? That name was given. You stated that your headmaster thought it better for the football match to be cancelled, owing to an outbreak of measles—"

"Mim-um-measles!" stammered Lunn.

"I should certainly not allow my boys to visit St. Jude's in these circumstances! I fail to understand you, Lunn. What—"

"There's some mistake, sir!" gasped Lunn. "The wires must have got mixed, or something. I never telephoned—"

"You certainly did!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

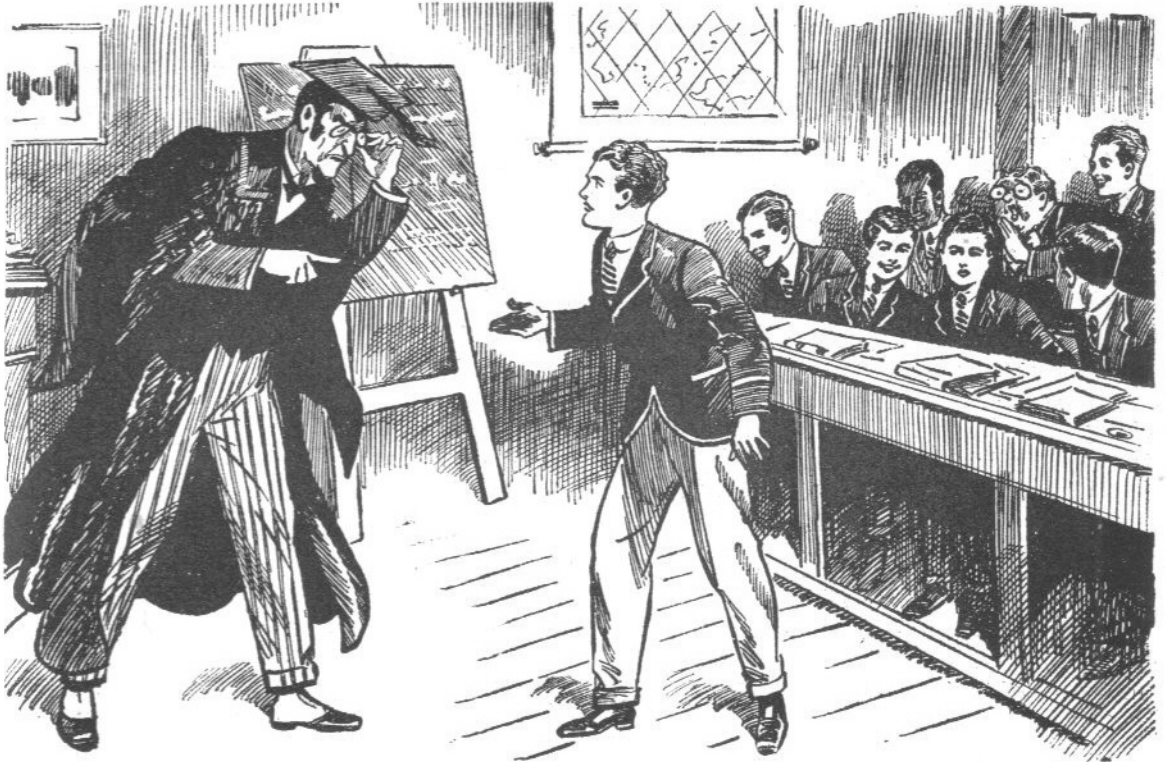
"But—but we haven't cancelled the match, sir—we're expecting the team from Greyfriars—the fellows are hanging about the field—"

"With measles in your school, Lunn—"

"But there isn't—I can't understand you, sir—there's been no measles here that I know of—"

"What?"

"Nothing of the kind, sir! There's nothing wrong here, and we've been expecting the team from Greyfriars! There's some mistake somewhere! I certainly never telephoned."



"Wharton!" rapped Mr. Quelch, his eyes glinting. "Was it you who spilled a large quantity of ink over the papers in my desk?" "No, sir!" said the head boy. "Then how do you account for the stain on your fingers?" demanded Mr. Quelch, sternly.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Do you mean to say, Lunn, that there is no outbreak of measles at St. Jude's?"

"Certainly not."

"You did not telephone to cancel the football match for that reason?"

"Nothing of the kind."

"I fail to understand this! Someone certainly did, giving the name of Lunn, and stating that he was speaking from St. Jude's."

"Oh, my hat! I—I mean, I can't make it out, then! It certainly was not I, or any St. Jude's man."

"This is very extraordinary!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "It appears that there has been some deception, if what you state is correct. I gave the message as I received it, and my boys believed that the match was cancelled."

"So that's why they haven't come! I can't understand it—must have been some fool—some fellow, playing a practical joke, I suppose—"

Mr. Quelch set his lips hard.

He was not a suitable subject for practical joking. The practical joker was likely to be sorry for his practical joking, if Quelch discovered him.

"Can I speak to Wharton, sir?"

"I do not know whether he is still in the school. The motor-bus that was to convey the boys to St. Jude's was sent away—and whether the boys are still within gates, I do not know."

"Oh!"

"However, you may hold the line, and I will send for Wharton."

"Thank you, sir."

Mr. Quelch turned from the telephone. He was very much surprised, and very much annoyed. Also, his valuable time was being wasted.

Still, he rang for Trotter. The school page was dispatched to find Harry Wharton.

He returned with the information that

Harry Wharton and his friends had gone out on their bicycles some time ago.

Mr. Quelch passed that information on to Lunn who, in a very puzzled and perplexed and annoyed frame of mind, rang off.

The call from St. Jude's had come too late for a chance of setting the matter right. Even had the Remove footballers been still on the spot, there was hardly time left for the journey of ten miles to St. Jude's and a football match. But the Remove footballers were not on the spot, and there was nothing to be done.

Mr. Quelch did not immediately resume his work on the Latin proses. He sat at his table with a knitted, frowning brow.

Someone had played a trick—a reckless and disrespectful trick, on the telephone. The Remove master had been made a fool of—the Remove footballers had been "dished," and their Form-master had been made unconsciously the means of "dishing" them!

Who had done this?

One name came, automatically, into Mr. Quelch's mind—Gilbert Tracy! His lips set harder.

He rose from his chair at last and left his study. Whoever had played that wretched trick, it could not be certain that he belonged to Greyfriars at all—the call might have come from some other trickster at St. Jude's, for all Quelch could say to the contrary. Nevertheless, he was assured that the trickster was a Greyfriars man—and hardly doubted that his name was Tracy.

If that was so, the young rascal would hardly have ventured to use one of the school telephones; the risk of detection would have been too great. He must, therefore, have gone out of gates; and Mr. Quelch was going to ascertain whether he had or not.

He was not long in ascertaining! Gosling, the porter, had seen Tracy wheel out his bicycle very soon after dinner.

Quelch walked back to the House with a knitted brow. Tracy had been out of gates when that deceptive telephone-call came! That settled that!

But beyond that, there was, so to speak, nothing doing. Within an easy radius of the school, Tracy had the choice of a score of public telephones, and it was hopeless to think of investigation in that direction.

All Mr. Quelch could learn was that Tracy might have done it—which was as good as proof to his mind; but not, of course, proof that he could act upon to the extent of calling the young rascal to account.

He returned to Latin proses with a grim brow.

Tracy was at the school on his responsibility. The Head was more than willing to send him home, but the matter was left in Quelch's hands. Tracy, knowing that, had set out to make him tired of keeping him there.

With a cunning beyond his years, he was, as it were, sniping Quelch from cover!

The Remove master knew, or as good as knew, that Tracy had inked his desk the previous day. He knew, or as good as knew, that Tracy had played this trick on the telephone. And for neither act could he deal with him!

He had to take knock after knock, while the young rascal laughed in his sleeve!

It was a peculiar situation. Never in his long career as a schoolmaster had Henry Samuel Quelch experienced anything like it before!

His ~~own~~ was grim as he corrected those Latin proses, and it was barely

(Continued on page 16.)

DROVE HOME ON STEAM-ROLLER!

Top-Hatted Removite's Escape

The topper, though not used so extensively as formerly at Greyfriars, is still trotted out on ceremonial occasions. Vernon-Smith wore one when he represented the Lower School Sports Section at the official opening of the new town playing-fields at Courtfield.

After the ceremony, when Smithy strolled through Courtfield on his own, he found that the topper had become such a phenomenon that the wearer of it was an object of great interest. Quite a number of people stared at him. Several sniggered. One or two rude boys catcalled after him.

Smithy, we need hardly say, is not the fellow to be upset by trifles of that kind. He sauntered down the High Street with his customary cool self-assurance, oblivious alike to stares, sniggers, and catcalls.

Only when a grinning errand-boy aimed at him with a pea-shooter and hit him on the ear did the Bounder deign to step down off his perch and take stock of his surroundings. When that happened, however, he took swift action.

Strutting back to the errand-boy, he dispossessed him of the pea-shooter and threw it into the road, where it was promptly flattened out by a passing lorry. He then tweaked the errand-boy's nose—hard—and calmly resumed his interrupted walk.

But the matter did not end there. The errand-boy, who seemed to be a popular figure in local circles, whistled shrilly and was soon surrounded by half a dozen sympathetic friends. Before Smithy had progressed fifty yards, he found a threatening crowd of tough-looking youths at his heels. Soon after that, they surrounded him. The biggest and toughest-looking of the lot peeled off his jacket and started squaring up to him.

"Fancy yer chance, mister?" was the question this somewhat unpleasant specimen asked. "If yer do, yer can gimme one back for this!"

"This" being a back-hander on Vernon-Smith's face, the Bounder thought it up to him to reply in kind. So he gave the youth a tap on the chin

that had the unexpected effect of knocking the youth spinning.

That did it! The entire troop decided to step in and take summary vengeance.

Smithy is a useful chap with his fists, but even Smithy could hardly hope to lick half a dozen, single-handed. After a quick think, he decided that discretion might be the better part of valour.

As he happened to be outside the entrance to Chunkley's Palm Lounge, he made a dash and sought refuge in that elegant restaurant, rightly judging that the tall and muscular commissionaire on duty outside would never allow his grimy assailants to follow him.

The commissionaire duly barred the way to them, and Smithy cheerfully went upstairs to the Palm Lounge and ordered tea, though, as a matter of fact, he had had tea already, an hour previously.

All would have been well if the errand-boy and his pals had not decided to wait for Smithy outside the Palm Lounge. Unfortunately, they did; so Smithy had to rack his brains to think of a way of getting past them. There was another exit from the restaurant; but the lads were naturally up to that dodge and divided up so that both doors were guarded.

The hour was rather late and there was only just time to get back to the school before locking-up. Something had to be done quickly.

A word to the commissionaire would

have brought a policeman to the rescue. But Smithy, of course, couldn't sink to the level of calling in the police.

He paid his bill, strolled to an open french window, and looked out into the street.

The Courtfield lads were still on guard. An old-fashioned steam-roller was puffing along towards the Palm Lounge.

Smithy had a sudden brainwave. Nipping out on to the balcony, he coolly climbed over the railings, poised himself on the ledge till the steam-roller was directly under the window, and then jumped!



No. 316.

EDITED



The steam-roller was one of the old kind with a broad roof over the driver's cab. Smithy landed right on the roof, fell on his hands and knees, and just managed to cling on. After he had recovered his breath and balance he sat down tailor-fashion and made himself comfortable.

The steam-roller was making for the scene of some road repairs that are going on near the school. The Bounder thought he would save the bus-fare and have a free ride to Greyfriars!

H. Vernon-Smith's Weekly Sports Shorts

It's the worst of bad form in sport to crow over one's victories; but I think Greyfriars men may allow themselves the luxury of a subdued chortle when a particularly notable win comes their way. Whether it's allowed or not, they are chortling quietly over the result of the Highcliffe Junior match, which ended up in a fine Greyfriars victory by 5 goals to 2 on the Highcliffe ground.

There are two reasons for chortling. One is that the game confirmed the opinion I expressed after the St. Jim's match that our Junior team this year is in the "super" class. The other is that we are now the only team left in our section with maximum points.

The three games we have played have all been won; and our record of 9 goals to our credit against 2 on the debit side is particularly good when you consider that our opponents have been teams which confidently expect to finish somewhere near the top of the table.

If I had the space at my disposal I might give you an account of the game which would warm the cockles of your hearts. As it is, I must content myself with saying that it was a gruelling contest, with no quarter asked for or given for two-thirds of the game. After that, we found that we had worn down the Highcliffians' resistance; and the score, which was 2-2 up to that point underwent a rapid alteration when we added 3 smashing goals to our total in the last twenty minutes.

Courtenay, I might mention, told me after the game that we had run them right off their feet and that the score might well have been 10-2 if the game had lasted another half-hour.

Providing we don't go stale, we certainly look like breaking all records this season.

There was no First Eleven match this week, but it is worthy of mention that in a trial game on Big Side Wingate scored 6 goals. The goalie against whom he piled up this imposing score was Tomlinson of the Fifth. Tomlinson is now contemplating going back to the forward line!

The Upper Fourth managed to beat Courtfield Ramblers Third Eleven by 2 goals to nil; but the rumour that Temple has now entered his team for the English Cup is said to be without foundation.

There is just sufficient space left to enable me to tell you that Russell of the Remove beat Dabney of the Upper Fourth on points in a 6-round boxing contest in the gym. The match was fought to settle a squabble between the two, who left the gym afterwards arm-in-arm and on the best of terms. Gratters to both!

CHAMPIONSHIP TABLE.

	P.	W.	D.	L.	Pts
1. Greyfriars ..	3	3	0	0	6
2. St. Jude's ..	3	2	1	0	5
3. St. Jim's ..	3	2	0	1	4
4. Highcliffe ..	3	2	0	1	4
5. Bagshot ..	3	1	1	1	3
6. Rylcombe G. S.	3	1	1	1	3
7. Rookwood ..	3	1	0	2	2
8. Claremont ..	2	0	1	1	1
9. Abbotsford ..	2	0	0	2	0
10. Redelville ..	3	0	0	3	0



PAY UP AND LOOK PLEASANT!

Tuckshop Dame Demands Settlement

Dear Mr. Bunter, Sir,—I am writing these few lines in regard to the outstanding account in the name of your son, Master William, hoping you will pardon the liberty.

Dear Mr. Bunter, Sir, the account is for £1/2/7 for ham patties, jam tarts, cream puffs, doughnuts and ginger-beer, ordered on July 9th last. Bill enclosed.

Dear Mr. Bunter, Sir, I made it a rule several terms ago never to give Master William credit. Because why? Because I always had to complain to the headmaster before I obtained a settlement. Then why did I give him credit again last term? Because of a reason I am going to give you.

On July 9th, dear Sir, your son came into my shop in a very great hurry and ordered the goods I have mentioned. "Dearie me, Master Bunter," I said. "I hope you have not forgotten that your account is closed. Cash before delivery is the only way I do business with you nowadays, Master Bunter," I said.

Master William turned up his nose, not very respectful-like at that. "Oh, really, Mrs. Mimble," he said. "I hope you don't think I haven't enough money to pay for a paltry little order like this, Mrs. Mimble," he said; and he tossed a ten-pound note over the counter.

Dear Mr. Bunter, Sir, I have never had ten pounds in my till since I have run the school shop at Greyfriars nor anything like it. But I

do not mind opening an account for any young gentleman who carries a ten-pound note in his pocket. So I said: "Well, Master Bunter, circumstances alter cases. I shall be quite pleased to re-open your account again," I said. "And you may settle up later on." And I let him take away the goods.

Dear Mr. Bunter, Sir, I have only just learned that the ten-pound note Master William showed me was not his at all. It had been dropped by Master Loder. As soon as he left my shop he ran into Master Loder, who was looking for the note, and he had to give it up. And my bill of £1/2/7 still remains unsettled.

Dear Mr. Bunter, Sir, I am writing with the headmaster's permission to ask you respectfully for a prompt settlement of your son's debt. No offence meant, of course.

Hoping for an early reply, dear Mr. Bunter, Sir.

Yours respectfully,
JESSIE MIMBLE.

YOUR EDITOR CALLING

Now that the long winter evenings are here, indoor recreations are in full swing at Greyfriars. Any evening you happen to look round the School House, you will find it a buzzing hive of activity.

The gym, of course, always attracts its quota of physical culture fans; and Mr. "Larry" Lascelles is busy nearly every evening instructing raw recruits in the noble art of self-defence. But more attractive still to the crowd are the debating and dramatic societies, which really come into their own at this season of the year.

Wibley is producing a play called "Beauty and the Bandit," which he has written himself and nearly a third of the Remove are taking part in it. If Wib. as a playwright is only half as good as he is in the role of a producer, "Beauty and the Bandit" is going to be a big hit. More about it anon!

As for the Remove Debating Society—well, words almost fail me when I attempt to describe the wealth of oratory that is poured out at its weekly meeting! Tom Redwing and Mark Linley in particular are making

great strides in public speaking this term and their speeches drew loud cheers when they opposed each other in debate this week. The proposition moved by Redwing, was: "That a brave bully is better than a kind-hearted coward." Redwing waxed truly eloquent in advocating the claims of the brave bully; but not more so than Linley when it was his turn to speak for the kind-hearted coward. At least a dozen fellows made speeches before the motion was put to the meeting and the voting shows how close were the arguments for and against. 12 for and 11 against.

Chess, draughts, table-tennis, carpentry and literary and artistic work also make their claims of Remove men, so you'll gather that time doesn't hang very heavily on our hands. Yet we still find time for a certain amount of ragging, just to balance things up! Meet you again next week, chums!

HARRY WHARTON.

WEATHER FORECAST!

A deep depression is centred over the Fifth Form passage, and violent storms may be expected this evening in the Games Study. Coker has just decided to demand a place in the Form footer team!

SAW BALLOON BARRAGE IN QUAD!

Stott's Strange Mistake

Stott burst into the Rag like a miniature cyclone after tea, the other day.

"Come and see, you men!" he yelled. "I've just spotted it out of my study window!"

The fellows in the Rag yawned. Stott, who has lately become an R.A.F. fan, has developed an annoying habit of ranking chaps out into the quad whenever a plane passes, in order to "air" his knowledge. (Forgive us for that one, chaps; it slipped out accidentally.)

"Can't you make it some other time, old sport?" asked Dick Rake. Rake was in the middle of a game of chess with Ogilvy. "Aeroplanes are ten a penny, anyway!" Bulstode grunted. "Who wants to go out to see a blessed aeroplane?"

"But it isn't an aeroplane!" whooped Stott. "It's a balloon barrage!"

"Eh?"

"Well, it's one of the balloons, anyway!" Stott said. "You can see it through the trees!"

"Rats!"

"Save it up till April the First, old man!" urged Tom Brown. "You might spot one or two new kids with it then."

"It's true!" Stott hooted.

"You can see it through the

trees, I tell you—a whacking great balloon, just going up!"

"Go and show it to Bunter," grinned Bob Cherry. "He's out in the quad now—looking for his cap, I fancy!"

Bunter, as a matter of fact, was about the only man in the quad just at that moment. It was rather a dreary, drizzly autumn evening, and most chaps preferred to be indoors. Bunter was out looking for his cap, which Bolsover had playfully shied in the air and lost for him earlier in the day.

Stott glared. He wanted to share his remarkable discovery with someone more worthy than Bunter. Bunter, as a fellow-enthusiast, made no appeal whatever to Stott. Besides, Bunter was too short-sighted to see anything more than a few yards away.

"You're a lot of footling fat-heads!" snorted Stott. "Whether you believe it or not, there's a whacking great balloon going up outside; and I'm jolly well going out to see it. Blow you!"

And Stott stamped wrathfully out of the Rag.

Several fellows followed him, in spite of the general scepticism. Genuine balloons are not seen every day of the week, and if



there really was one in the neighbourhood, it was worth the trouble of going out of the Rag to see—especially if it was connected with the balloon barrage scheme for defence against air raids, as Stott seemed to think it was.

When the fellows reached the front door of the School House, they crowded on to the top of the steps and peered across to the misty elms on the other side of the quad.

"There it is!" said Stott.

He pointed excitedly as he spoke. The fellows screwed up their eyes and gazed at the spot he was indicating.

It was a balloon right enough—that was their first idea about it, anyway. You could just see it through the branches of the trees.



(Continued from page 13.)

possible that he spotted, with a stern eye, little faults in the same which might at any other time have escaped his attention!

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Who Was It?

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "What's up—"

"Wharton—"

"What the thump—"

Harry Wharton came into the Rag, with an expression on his face that drew many glances. He was almost pale with anger.

There was a crowd of fellows in the Rag after tea. Wharton had been sent for to his Form-master's study, and he came back with very plain indications in his looks that something was "up."

"Had it bad, old chap?" asked Billy Bunter, with a sympathetic blink.

The fat Owl concluded that it had been a "whopping."

Harry Wharton did not heed that question. He stared round the room.

"Is Tracy here?" he rapped.

"Here!" drawled a voice as Tracy half-rose from an armchair by the fire. "Anything wanted?"

Wharton strode across to him.

"You rotter!" he said, between his teeth. "Was it you telephoned to Quelch and dished us over the football match?"

Tracy raised his eyebrows.

"Did anyone telephone to Quelch?" he asked. "What the dickens are you driving at?"

"Smithy! You were going to play Tracy in the pick-up. Did he play?" called out the captain of the Remove.

"No," snapped the Bounder.

"Why not?"

"I couldn't find him."

"He was out of gates, then?"

"I suppose he was, as I couldn't find him," grunted the Bounder. "What the dooce does it matter?"

"It matters a lot. I guessed that he was out of gates before you told me. Some cur was out of gates telephoning to Quelch while you were ragging me in this room to make me play him against St. Jude's. I've just had it from Quelch—that's why he sent for me."

"Well, what—" asked Frank Nugent.

"After we'd washed out the St. Jude's match, Quelch had a call from St. Jude's—Lunn, asking why we hadn't come!" said Harry, his voice trembling with anger. "The first call was a spoof. There's no measles at St. Jude's, no reason why the match shouldn't have been played. The St. Jude's men were waiting on their ground, expecting us, and Lunn phoned to ask why we never turned

"Oh crumbs!"

"The first call was a trick," went on Harry. "Somebody used Lunn's name on the telephone and gave Quelch a message for me to wash out the match. Quelch never suspected anything—and, of course, we didn't, when we got it from Quelch. Who played that rotten trick on us?"

"Oh, scissors!" exclaimed Bob. "Mean to say that Lunn was expecting us all the time?"

"Exactly that!"

"By gum!" said the Bounder. His eyes turned on Tracy, who stood quite cool and self-possessed. "Was it you, Tracy?"

Gilbert laughed.

"My dear chap, I've been nowhere near a telephone this afternoon! I went out on my bike, as I wasn't wanted in the footer. I've heard since that Wharton changed his mind and was going to put me in. I couldn't be expected to guess that, could I?"

"If you'd guessed that, you wouldn't have spoofed Quelch on the telephone and dished us over the match," said the captain of the Remove. "You dished yourself, as well as us, you worm!"

"How do you know Tracy did it?" asked Peter Todd.

"Yes, let's hear that," drawled Tracy. "I should be fearfully interested to hear how Wharton knows these things!"

"Who else would have done it?" said Harry Wharton. "Nobody had any reason for playing such a foul trick, excepting you. You told me you'd make me sorry for leaving you out. You had it in your mind then."

"You're a thought-reader?" asked Tracy blandly.

"I know you did it!"

"Well, if you know, it's no good my saying anything, is it?" remarked Tracy, still bland. "But don't you think you ought to trot out something in the way of proof when you accuse a fellow?"

Harry Wharton looked at him. He felt no more doubt on the subject than Mr. Quelch did. Still, he had to admit that there was nothing like proof. Some person unknown had put through that spoof telephone call. He believed that it was Gilbert—but that was all!

"Does dear old Quelch fancy it was I?" asked Tracy.

"He did not say so, but he must know," answered Harry. "Isn't it like one of your dirty tricks?"

"How nicely you put it?" drawled Tracy.

"I say, you fellows, it must have been that cad, Tracy!" squeaked Billy Bunter. "Look what he did yesterday—"

"It looks like it, Tracy!" said Bob Cherry. "Nobody else—"

But he broke off. Tracy had a motive; and he had had an opportunity. But that could not be called proof.

"Didn't the call come from St. Jude's?" asked Tracy. "Quelch must have supposed that it did."

"Quelch supposed that it did; but it couldn't have," said Wharton. "That's rot!"

"I don't see it. Some fellow there may have played a practical joke. Looks like it, to me."

"I suppose that's possible," said the Bounder slowly, his eyes very keenly on the face of the new junior.

"It may be possible, but it's not what has happened," said Harry Wharton. "If we had proof of what you've done, Tracy, you'd get the ragging of your life. We can't touch you without proof—"

"Thanks!" yawned Tracy.

"But we know well enough—at least,

I do! You reptile! I wish Quelch would let you have your own way, and get out of the school. You're not fit to stay in a decent school!" Harry Wharton looked round, over the crowd of Removites. "Now listen to this, you fellows! You badgered me this afternoon into agreeing to let that cad into the eleven. I gave in—and all the while that rotten worm was playing this trick on us. If you want it clearer than that—"

"It's not proved," said Hazeldene.

"It can't be proved, but it's clear enough. I want to make this plain," went on Harry Wharton. "I was a fool to give in to-day, knowing that treacherous rotter as I do—and I shan't give in again. So long as I'm skipper he won't play for the Remove. We shall fix up another date with St. Jude's—and Tracy will not play."

Gilbert bit his lip. He had, as Wharton had said, dished himself, as well as the others, by his miserable trickery. But for that, the match would have been played at St. Jude's, and he would have played in it.

"I mean that," went on Harry. "Tracy will never play for the Remove so long as I'm skipper, and any fellow who has anything to say on the subject can save his breath. If you want me to resign, I'll throw the job up on the spot. You've only got to say so. But while I'm skipper that outsider is barred from Remove football."

"If he did it—" said Squiff slowly. "I know he did," said as if I'd seen him at the phone. "That's that!"

"Any excuse is better than none!" drawled Tracy. "The long and the short of it is that you won't play a man who can play your head off. If you couldn't find this excuse you'd find another."

Wharton turned his back on him, without answering.

"Won't you even play me on Saturday, against the Third?" asked Tracy banteringly. "I've heard Tubb say that he's going to beat you this time—you'll want a man who can shoot goals."

Harry Wharton walked out of the Rag. The juniors were left in a buzz of excited discussion. Someone had played a rotten trick, particularly exasperating to the Remove footballers. But whether it was Tracy or not was a matter of doubt in most minds. And the fact that the captain of the Remove was quite decided on the subject made no difference to that!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Beastly For Bunter!

"LOOK!" murmured Bob Cherry. "The Famous Five grinned as they looked."

It was morning break, and in break, Billy Bunter's footsteps led him, inevitably, to the tuckshop. Had his celebrated postal order arrived, Bunter would have headed for the door of that establishment. It looked as if it hadn't, for he was heading for the window.

In the window could be seen certain attractive things which, in a happier financial state, the fat Owl would have been glad to park within his extensive circumference. Bunter was going to feast his eyes, as there was no other feasting to be done.

As it happened, Tubb of the Third was gazing in at that window. His back, naturally, was turned towards Bunter, as the fat junior rolled up. And as soon as he spotted George Tubb.

my hat!"

"But—"

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Bunter appeared to forget the attractions of the tuckshop window, and concentrated his attention on the Third Form fellow.

He tiptoed behind Tubb, with great caution.

His eyes gleamed through his spectacles.

The Famous Five, observing him, grinned. Billy Bunter's intention was unmistakable. He was going to boot Tubb!

A couple of days ago, Tubb had, under pretence of bunking Bunter, left him hanging on the Form-room window-sill. Apparently, Bunter now saw an opportunity for repaying Tubb. Booting that cheeky fag for his cheek in playing that trick on a Remove man was exactly what Tubb deserved, and Bunter was going to give him what he so richly deserved.

But he was cautious about it.

Tubb, though only a fag in the Third Form, was a rather hefty youth for his age. He had, at least, styled himself, captain of the Third. The Third Form had a football team of their very own, and Tubb skipped it—and they could beat, at least, the Second Form.

Third Form football consisted largely of kick and rush, barge and bawl; and when they had the distinction of playing the Remove, the fags were, as the poet expresses it, scattered like deer at the blast of the hunter's horn! The Remove condescended to play them, by way of practice; and if Tubb ever dreamed of a victory, it remained only a dream. Really, they had no chance, though on such occasions, the Remove would put in their second or third rate men to give the fags a spot of a chance.

But George Tubb, if he was no great shakes as a Soccer champion, had a very emphatic punch; and Billy Bunter, while anxious to give Tubb what he deserved, was not keen on stopping that punch.

Had Tubb been aware of Bunter and his deadly intentions, it was improbable that Bunter ever would have got away with the booting. So the astute fat Owl schemed to take him by surprise.

Tubb's attention was fixed; he did not look round. Closer and closer tiptoed Bunter, watched with grinning faces by Harry Wharton & Co. at a little distance. They were wondering, with considerable amusement, whether the fat Owl would get away with the booting!

Bunter was directly behind Tubb at last. Still the Third Former did not glance round, remaining unconscious of Bunter.

Up went Bunter's right foot!

Thud!

It landed—hard! It landed with a heavy crash!

Tubb, taken quite by surprise, pitched forward, with a loud and startled howl.

"Goal!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tubb, yelling, spun round.

Had it been Coker of the Fifth, or some such hefty senior, who had booted him, Tubb would have had to make the best of it. But it was only Bunter—and Tubb, as soon as he saw that it was Bunter, jumped at Bunter!

True, Bunter was a Remove man, and Tubb was only in the Third; but Bunter was no fighting man, and George Tubb was—and the truculent look on Tubb's face made Bunter wish, on the spot, that he hadn't booted him, richly as he deserved it for leaving a fat Owl hanging on a window-sill.

Tubb rushed forward—Bunter backed promptly! But Tubb rushed faster than Bunter backed! A Third Form fist landed on the widest part of Bunter,

and the fat Owl tottered and sat down.

"Ow!" he gasped. "Wow! Keep off, you cheeky beast! Wow!"

"Get up!" roared Tubb. He pranced round Bunter with clenched fists. "Up you get! I'll teach you to boot me, you flabby frog!"

"Go it, Bunter!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh crikey! I say, you fellows, keep that cheeky beast off!" gasped Bunter. "I say, collar him, and jolly well bump him!"

The Famous Five came up, laughing. Tubb eyed them uncertainly—Billy Bunter hopefully. Remove men were bound to stand by a Remove man, in Bunter's opinion; and he would have been very glad to see that cheeky little beast, George Tubb, collared and bumped on the quad.

"I say, you fellows, bag him!" gasped Bunter. "I say, give him jip! Bump him! I say—leggo my collar, Bob Cherry! Wharrer you grabbing my collar for?"

"Helping you up!" explained Bob.

"I don't want to be helped up! I mean, I've hurt my leg, and can't get up! Leggo my collar!"

"But Tubby's waiting for you—"

"Let him wait! I mean—leggo, you beast!"

"I'll burst him!" roared Tubb, ferociously. "Booting a chap! I'll give him booting! You fat funk—"

"Bear a hand, somebody!" said Bob. "I'm not a steam crane! I can't lift ten tons!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Johnny Bull bore a hand.

Between them, Billy Bunter was heaved to his feet. He did not seem glad to get to them. With Tubb in that warlike and ferocious mood, sitting down seemed to suit Bunter better.

"Now, then!" roared Tubb.

He rushed to the attack.

Billy Bunter dodged round the Famous Five. More than ever, he wished that he hadn't booted Tubb!

But it was too late to wish that now! Tubb had been booted, and Tubb was on the warpath.

"I say, you fellows, keep him off!" yelled Bunter. "I'm not going to scrap with a sneaking fag!"

"Ain't you?" roared Tubb. "You'll jolly well see! You fellows gerrout of the way! I'll burst him all over the quad!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Famous Five, as Bunter circled rapidly round them, and Tubb circled in pursuit.

"Hold on, Bunter!"

"Mop him up, old fat man!"

But Billy Bunter was not thinking of mopping up Tubb of the Third. He was only thinking of keeping somehow out of the reach of that fierce and ferocious fag! He flew.

He cut across the quad almost like an arrow from a bow. After him cut Tubb, raging. The keener Bunter was to avoid conflict, the keener George Tubb was to get on with it.

It was frightfully undignified for a Remove man to flee with a fag in pursuit; but Bunter, at the moment, was not bothering about dignity. Escape filled his fat thoughts.

He headed for the House—but Paget and Bolsover minor of the Third cut into his way to stop him; and Bunter had to dodge away from the door. Then he headed for the windows of Masters' Studies. Quelch was in his study—and under Quelch's window, even the ferocious Tubb could hardly carry on hostilities.

Gasping for breath, the fat Owl leaned on the wall under Mr. Quelch's window, and blinked round at Tubb.

Tubb of the Third came to a halt. He could see that Quelch was in his study, and punching Bunter under his Form-master's eyes was too risky. He waited for Bunter to shift.

Nothing would have induced Bunter to shift from that safe spot. He stayed where he was, gasping.

Tubb watched him from a little distance. Bunter had to shift when the bell went for third school, and Tubb was going to wait for the bell! Then he was going to get Bunter on his way to the Form-room. Bunter was going to learn, beyond the possibility of doubt, that he could not boot the captain of the Third with impunity!

Clang, clang!

It was the bell!

Fellows headed for the Form-rooms—with the exception of Billy Bunter! Quelch was very severe on unpunctuality; but Bunter had to risk being late for class.

Luckily for him, Tubb did not want to be late for Mr. Wiggins. When the bell ceased to ring, he shook a fist at the fat Owl.

"You wait till after class!" he called out, with deadly significance. And he cut off, to rush in after the Third.

Then, and not till then, Billy Bunter got a move on.

He rolled into the House, and arrived at the Remove Form Room—three minutes late! Those three minutes earned him fifty lines from Mr. Quelch.

But fifty lines did not worry Bunter so much as the prospect of meeting Tubb after class!

That worried him very much. More than ever did Billy Bunter repent of having seized that golden opportunity of booting Tubb! But repentance came, as it so often does, too late to be of any use; and during third school that morning, Billy Bunter gave much less attention to his Form-master than to what awaited him when the Remove came out again.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Hot Words!

"ABOUT St. Jude's—" said Vernon-Smith. "Next Wednesday!" answered Harry Wharton.

"It's fixed, then?"

"Yes; Nugent's been over to see them about it! They've got a vacant date next Wednesday, and so have we; so that's all right!" said the captain of the Remove.

Smithy was aware that Nugent, who was secretary of the Remove football club, had gone over to St. Jude's after class. He had seen him come in and speak to Wharton in the quad, so he came along to inquire the result. Now that he knew that the match was to be played the following week, another matter came uppermost in his mind, and he went on:

"Now about Tracy—"

Harry Wharton interrupted him without ceremony:

"You heard what I said in the Rag yesterday, Smithy! Nothing about Tracy! Don't talk about that treacherous cad to me!"

"That means that he's out of it, then?"

"I've said so."

"Are you a giddy dictator, or what?" inquired the Bounder sarcastically. "Or are you descended from that old sportsman who spoke as one having authority, saying: 'Do this'—and he doeth it?"

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"Put it how you like, Smithy! I

believe you know as well as I do that Tracy played that trick on the phone. You're no fool!"

"Not fool enough to leave out the best footballer that ever kicked a Soccer ball, if I were skipper!" said the Bounder tartly.

"You're not skipper!" Wharton pointed out.

"And you mayn't stay skipper long, if you take this line! We've no use for dictators in the Remove, as I've told you before."

"If the other fellows say the same, I'm ready to step down. I've said so, and I mean it. So long as I captain the Remove, Tracy is left out!"

"You want to be licked at St. Jude's?"

"We've won matches before Tracy came to Greyfriars. We shall win them again afte. he's left—if he gets away with his stunt of feeding Quelch up till he turns him out. We're not depending on a new man in the Form that I know of."

"That's all very well!" said Vernon-Smith savagely. "But you know as well as I do that with Tracy in the team St. Jude's won't have an earthly!"

"I don't know it!" answered Wharton coolly. "Goals may be bagged from penalty kicks, and if there is foul play—"

"Oh, cut that out—we've had all that! You can't prove anything against the fellow, and he can walk all over St. Jude's. I want to win the game, if you don't!" snapped Smithy.

Harry Wharton looked at the Bounder very keenly.

"What are you driving at exactly, Smithy?" he asked quietly. "We've got a good team—as good as St. Jude's—we've got at least equal chances, and if we're beaten, one side has to lose, anyhow. We shall get a good game, and that's the chief thing. Why are you so jolly keen on making a dead cert of a win? Have you got some of your putrid bets on the game, or what?"

Smithy coloured.

"So that's it!" exclaimed Wharton angrily and scornfully. "I'm to play a fellow who may disgrace us by playing foul, and who may let us down—so that you can win a bet you've made with some gambling blackguard!"

"That's not all!" muttered the Bounder. "I've got a bet on it with Angel of the Fourth—I don't mind admitting that. But a good man ought not to be left out—and I stick to that!"

"Then you'd better wash out your bet with Angel of the Fourth, if it depends on Tracy playing for the Remove!" he said. "He won't play! You ought to be jolly well ashamed of yourself, Smithy!"

"Go it!" sneered the Bounder. "I like you everthony manner!"

"Oh, chuck it—you make me feel sick!" snapped Wharton.

"You'll hear from other fellows, as well as from me, if you stick to keeping Tracy out!"

"Are you going to tell them that we're to arrange football matters so that you can win your filthy bets on the matches?" exclaimed Harry.

"How many of them would back you up in that? You're the only man in the team who would do such a rotten thing, Smithy. I'm willing to put it to the vote, whether Remove football is to be run as a gambling proposition. Are you?"

"Oh, don't be a fool!" snapped Vernon-Smith, his face crimson. "I

don't care a bean about winning a quid from Aubrey Angel; but—"

"But you want a dead cert for your dirty quid, all the same. And nothing else matters. Well, get Angel to bet on the Third on Saturday, if you can—then you'll have your dead cert!" said Wharton scornfully. "We shall walk over the Third—without Tracy's help! There's a dead cert for you!"

"Oh, shut up!" said Vernon-Smith savagely, and he turned and stalked away, with a knitted brow.

He went into the House, and Tom Redwing met him on the Remove landing. He was waiting for Smithy to come in to tea.

"Anything up, Smithy?" he asked, as he glanced at the Bounder's scowling face.

"That fool Wharton—!" snapped Smithy.

"Is he a fool?" asked Tom quietly.

"Yes—a silly, obstinate fool! He's sticking to it that that new man, Tracy, is to be barred from Remove football."

"I shouldn't call him a fool for that! I shouldn't play Tracy, if I were skipper," said Redwing.

"Then you're a fool, too!"

"Thanks!" said Tom, and he went down the stairs.

In Smithy's present mood, he preferred to keep clear of the study.

Vernon-Smith scowled after him and tramped on to Study No. 4 in the Remove. He flung open the door with a crash, and there was a startled squeak in the study.

"Oh crickey! Keep out of here, you beast!"

The Bounder stared at Billy Bunter.

He had not expected to find that fat youth in his study, and certainly was not glad to see him there. And certainly he had not expected Bunter to tell him to keep out of his own study.

"Oh! You!" exclaimed Bunter, blinking at him. "I thought it was that young cad Tubb after me again—"

"Get out, you fat fool!" snapped the Bounder.

"I—I say, Smithy, mind if I stick here for a bit?" asked Bunter.

"That young brute Tubb may look in my study—"

"You fat funk!"

"I'm not afraid of him, of course!" said Bunter. "I hope I'm not the man to funk a fag! That's rot! But the—the fact is—"

"Are you getting out?"

"I—I'll stay to tea, if you like, Smithy!" suggested Bunter. "What about me tea-ing here to-day, and you come to tea in my study to-morrow? I'm standing rather a spread in Study No. 7 to-morrow, old chap—I'm expecting a postal order—"

"Get out!"

"I—I say, kid, did you see Tubb anywhere about—Skinner said he was coming up here? I—I'm not funking the cheeky little beast, of course, but I'd rather not see him at present. You—you see— I—I say, Smithy, keep off, you beast! If you kick me, I'll— Wow, wow! Stoppit! Oh crickey!"

Billy Bunter left the Bounder's study in quite a hurry. Smithy was not in a good temper—and certainly not in the mood to be bothered by the fat and fatuous Owl. He got in three—before the Owl of the Remove dodged out. And Billy Bunter fled, yelling, along the Remove passage. And Smithy, with an angry grunt, slammed the door after him.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Tracy's Latest!

"OH crickey!" gasped Billy Bunter.

He came to a sudden halt on the Remove landing.

Below, on the staircase, a head came into view.

Bunter knew that shock head. It belonged to George Tubb, of the Third Form.

Tubb was coming up to the Remove!

Skinner had told Bunter that Tubb was in the offing, but the fat Owl had not been sure whether that was not one of Skinner's little jokes. Still, he had adopted "safety-first" as his motto, and taken refuge in the Bounder's study. Driven out of that refuge by the disgruntled Bounder, he sighted Tubb coming up the staircase—and he could not doubt that the fag, whom he had so unwisely booted, was after him.

He halted—and backed!

It was useless to dodge into his own study—Tubb, if he was after him, would look there first. He dodged into the first study in the passage and shut the door quickly.

Study No. 1 belonged to Wharton, Nugent, and the new fellow Tracy! Tubb was not likely to look in there. If he did, Bunter had to hunt cover. For although Bunter was not going to admit, even to himself, that he funk'd an encounter with a Third Form fag, he was undoubtedly very unwilling to meet George Tubb.

But he was all right in Wharton's study. Tubb could not remain long in the Remove quarters—any Remove man, excepting Bunter, would kick him out if he was seen hanging about there. Bunter had only to wait!

He heard Tubb come up the passage from the landing. If the young ruffian went direct to Study No. 7 to look for Bunter, it was all right. Still, he might look into other studies as he passed—most of the Remove not having yet come up to tea.

Bunter resolved not to take chances. Ever since break that morning Billy Bunter had been leading a rather hunted life, and he was as anxious as ever not to be run to earth.

He backed the study armchair towards the wall, and stood behind it, ready to pop down out of sight if Tubb looked in.

A minute later he was very glad that he had taken that precaution. The door opened, and Bunter popped down behind the high back of the armchair, with the swiftness of a jack-in-the-box.

"Not here!" he heard a grunt, and knew that it was Tubb.

After that, Bunter naturally expected the fag to pass on. Instead of which, Tubb of the Third came into the study.

The fat Owl palpitated behind the armchair. To his horror, Tubb came straight across to that armchair.

Bunter gave himself up for lost—or, rather, found!

But, to his relief and astonishment, Tubb did not shift the armchair and reveal him. Tubb sat down in the chair. He had apparently walked across to it with that intention.

It was a relief, but a puzzle. Why a fag of the Third had come to sit down in Wharton's study was quite mysterious. Obviously he was not, after all, after Bunter. The remark he had made as he stepped in could not have referred to Bunter.

He had expected to see some other fellow. The other fellow not being there, Tubb was waiting for him,

Wharton or Nugent, about the football match on Saturday, perhaps.

Bunter was glad to be undiscovered. He had to remain undiscovered, or pay the penalty for that booting outside the tuckshop in break.

That was easy enough, as clearly George Tubb had no idea that anyone but himself was in the room.

Still, if he was waiting for Wharton or Nugent, he was likely to have to wait a long time. Bunter knew, whether Tubb did or not, that they were tea-ing that day in Bob Cherry's study, No. 13, up the passage. So they were not likely to come to the study at all.

But five or six minutes later there was another step in the doorway, and a junior came in and shut the door after him.

Whether it was Wharton or Nugent, Bunter could not see; but he supposed it was one or the other, not thinking of Tracy. Then he heard the voice of the new junior.

"Oh, you're here, Tubb!"

"Waiting for you!" grunted Tubb. "You asked me to come up here to speak to you after class, and here I am. You've kept me waiting."

"Sorry. A few minutes—"

"Well, what's it about?" asked Tubb. "Blessed if I know what you've got to jaw to me about, Tracy!"

Tubb was puzzled, and so was Bunter, behind the armchair. What the new man in the Remove could have to jaw about to the Third Form fellow was quite a mystery to Bunter. "It's about the football," said Tracy.

"The match on Saturday?" asked Tubb. "Well, what about it? You playing?"

"Oh, no! Wharton doesn't want me in his eleven, even for a match with the Third," said Tracy, with a sneer. "I can play his head off, and he doesn't want his nose put out of joint."

Tubb laughed.

"I know you can play," he said. "I saw you in the game with the Shell. You took all the goals for the Remove. I heard that you fouled a Shell man, and your skipper's dropped you for that reason."

"That was the excuse," said Tracy. "The Shell were beaten by three goals to two. I took the three, and the two were taken after I left the field."

"I know. You can play footer. I've heard some of the seniors talking about it," said Tubb. "But what's it got to do with me?"

"Think you will beat the Remove on Saturday?"

"We're jolly well going to try!" said Tubb stoutly. "I don't see why we shouldn't pull it off—especially if you ain't playing for them, Tracy. Of course, they're an older Form, and bigger, and we haven't a big chance. Still we're jolly well going to try hard."

"Good man!" said Tracy. "But I—"

"They don't go all out in the game with us, either," went on Tubb. "The big men stand out—chaps like Cherry and Field and Brown. I know we've no chance against their strongest team. But I don't see why we shouldn't beat a second-rate lot. We're going to try."

"Like some help?"

"Eh? How do you mean?"

"I mean that I'm out of Remove football, and I'd like a game if I can get one. You can play a man outside your Form, if you like. Play me."

Tubb stared at him. Billy Bunter, behind the armchair, almost squeaked

in surprise. So this was Tracy's game.

This was his "latest."

"Well, by gum!" said Tubb, at last. "I say, do you mean that, Tracy? Pulling my leg—"

"Not at all," said Gilbert. "You've seen me play, and you can ask any man in the Remove. They're all ragging Wharton for leaving me out. I want a game, and I'd be glad to play for the Third."

"Against your own Form?" said Tubb.

"That's nothing, as I'm turned out of the Form team. Besides, if you were short of a man, the Remove would lend you one. Nothing in that."

"That's so," agreed Tubb.

He sat and stared at the new Removeite. His eyes were gleaming. All the Lower School at Greyfriars knew of Tracy's wonderful, almost meany,

pro prowess at the great game of Soccer. He was a prize-packet for any team

The fact that his own skipper had no use for him looked, to many fellows, as if his skipper was a fat-head. Of the rights and wrongs of the matter, fellows naturally knew little, outside the Remove, and even in the Remove the majority of fellows were against Wharton's decision. So that did not count very much against Tracy.

"By gum!" said George Tubb.

Tubb wanted to beat the Remove. A victory at football over the Remove meant fadeless glory for the f a g footballers. There was little that the ambitious Tubb would not have given to send the Remove footballers defeated off the field.

This was a glorious chance. True, a Third Form victory with a Remove recruit in the ranks would not be the victory, pure and simple, that Tubb would have liked. Still, it would be a victory. Third Form fellows would be able to say: "The other day, you know, when we beat the Remove—"

"By gum!" repeated Tubb.

"Like the idea?" asked Tracy.

"If you mean it, I jolly well do!" said Tubb. "I don't see why we shouldn't play a Remove man, if his own side don't want him. Wharton's got first choice, and if he won't have you—"

"That's definite!"

"Well, he can't expect you to hang about with your hands in your pockets, while other fellows are playing Soccer," argued Tubb. "If you can't get a game in your own Form, you've a right to look outside for one. Where do you want to play?"

"Centre-forward—but anywhere you like. You're skipper."

Tubb smiled with gratification.

The acknowledgment of his power and authority was quite proper, of course, as he was captain of the Third. Still, it came very agreeably from a Remove man with such a remarkable reputation as a footballer. Tracy, among the fags, was rather like a whale among the minnows, and Tubb rather expected him to put on airs.

Gilbert, as a matter of fact, was the (Continued on next page.)

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fellow to put on airs. But he was playing a very careful game now. It was true that he was keen on getting a game—any game—and that much was to his credit. But his chief object was to humiliate the Remove by a defeat at the hands of a mob of fags, and to show his own Form that they could not do without him. So he was very, very careful to keep on the right side of George Tubb.

"Centre-forward, if you like," said Tubb. "I'll shift along and make room for you. I'm not going to pretend that you won't be the backbone of the team, Tracy, if you play for us. You will!"

"Oh, I don't know about that," said Tracy. "I've seen you playing, Tubb, and you're a good man. And young Paget is good. I'm not thinking of taking anything out of your hands. Just play me if you choose, and where you choose, the same as if I was in the Third. And keep it dark till the match comes off."

"You're going to play, you bet!" said Tubb, as he rose from the armchair. "And if we don't beat the Remove this time, you can use my head for a Soccer ball. I can tell you, all the men will jump at it when I tell them. When I stick up my list, you can bet that G. Tracy will be in it. What-ho!"

Tubb left the study with a cheery grin on his face.

Billy Bunter heard Gilbert Tracy chuckle after he was gone; then the new junior sat in the armchair to smoke a cigarette. After that, however, Tracy also left the study, and the fat Owl was free to emerge at last from his cover.

He grinned as he emerged.

There was now a rod in pickle for the Remove, when they met the Third on the football field on Saturday afternoon—quite a startling surprise in store for them. So far, none knew it—none but Bunter. Bunter liked to be the first man with the news, and this time there was no doubt that he was in exclusive possession of quite a thrilling item.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Discouraging A Sportsman!

"SUPPOSE—" said Billy Bunter. Peter Todd looked at him across the study table. "Suppose what, fathead?" he inquired.

"I mean, suppose—" "Suppose you leave some of the jam for other fellows?" asked Peter. "Is that what you were supposing?"

"Oh, really, Toddy! If you're going to be mean about the jam—"

"Not at all; you've left none for me to be mean about. Where's the marmalade?"

"I say, suppose—" "And I say—where's the marmalade?"

"How should I know where the marmalade is, Toddy?" asked Bunter irritably. "You laid the table for tea. I haven't seen it. I certainly never ate it while you were making the toast, and I never had the biscuits with it, either. Perhaps you left it in the cupboard. Better look!"

Peter Todd did not seem to think that he had better look in the cupboard; he looked at Bunter with a very fixed look.

"You guzzling gormandizer—" he said.

"I say, never mind the marmalade, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1.602.

Toddy; I can manage with the jam. There isn't enough really, but I never was greedy. I say, suppose—" Bunter disposed of the last scrape of jam from the pot, drew a sticky sleeve across a sticky mouth, and blinked at his study-mate through his big spectacles. "I say, old chap, suppose a fellow knew that the Third had a jolly good chance of beating the Remove on Saturday—"

"Eh?" Peter stared and forgot the marmalade at that surprising suggestion. "Wharton isn't going to put you in to play for the Remove, is he?"

"No—" "Well, then, the Third won't have an earthly. What are you driving at, fathead?"

"Beast! I mean, suppose a chap knew," said Bunter. "Suppose a chap heard a chap talking to another chap—quite by accident, of course—I'm not the fellow to listen behind an armchair, as you know, Toddy—" "Oh, my hat!"

"Still, suppose a chap heard a chap, and a chap knew that a chap was fixing it up with another chap to play for a chap—"

"What a lot of chaps!" said Peter. "A whole chapter of chaps! Do you happen to mean anything, or are you talking out of the back of your neck—as per usual?"

"Well, I mean, I'm not the fellow to bet on a football match as a rule," said Bunter. "It's pretty putrid. Still, just once in a way a fellow might. I mean, suppose a fellow knew—"

"Let me catch you betting on the matches!" said Toddy. "I'll warn you! Smithy's the only man in the Remove who does that kind of thing, except Skinner sometimes. And if either of them belonged to this study I'd give 'em something to cure all that."

"I shall do as I jolly well like, of course!" said Bunter, with dignity. "But, I say, Peter, suppose a fellow knew that there was a jolly good chance of backing the winner at fearfully long odds—what? Not the sort of thing I'd do as a rule; but when a fellow knows—"

"You howling ass!" said Peter Todd, staring at him. "Nobody here would take a bet on the Remove against the Third; everybody knows that we shall walk over the fags at football. Nobody would put a penny on the Third against a quid. He would lose the penny, without a chance of the quid. What are you grinning at, you fat chump?"

"He, he, he! I wasn't thinking of backing the Remove, Peter! What about backing the Third at long odds? Smithy would take it on. Smithy will lay bets on anything from a football match to a fellow's chance in an exam. He would give me ten to one on the Remove."

"Ten thousand to one would be nearer the mark," said Peter. "What do you mean, blitherer?"

"Well, suppose the Third pull it off—"

"They can't—and won't!"

"They might!" grinned Bunter.

"You see, I'm in the secret—"

"What secret?"

"Oh, nothing! I'm not telling you anything! I mean to say, there's nothing to tell!" amended Bunter hastily. "If there was, of course, I'd tell you at once—you being a pal, Peter. But there isn't. I never heard Tubb of the Third talking to anybody—in fact, I wasn't behind the armchair at the time."

"Ye gods!" said Peter. "Still, suppose Tubb had a new man

in his team—a jolly good man!" said Bunter. "That would make a lot of difference, Peter."

"Not a fearful lot, unless he was some wonderful man like Tracy," answered Peter. "And there's only one Tracy here that I know of. What the dickens are you grinning at now, you fat image?"

"Oh, nothing! But, I say, suppose I offered Smithy a bet on the Third—don't you think he'd jump at it at long odds?"

"Hardly, as you haven't any money to pay up."

"Well, I'm expecting a postal order before Saturday—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I'm practically certain of that postal order, as it's from one of my titled relations. Still, if it didn't come, you'd lend me a pound, wouldn't you, Peter?"

"I'll lend you a pound with pleasure—"

"Oh, good!"

"If you can get it out of a shilling—"

"Eh?"

"And leave twelve pence change! Not otherwise!"

"You silly ass!" roared Bunter. "I—I mean, look here, dear old chap, if you've got a bob, lend me the bob. Smithy will give ten to one, and that will be half-a-quid if I win—I mean, when I win! And I'll stand a spread in the study with Smithy's ten bob, Peter."

Peter Todd gazed blankly at his fat study-mate.

What had put it into Bunter's fat head that Tubb & Co. might beat the Remove at Soccer he could not guess.

It was true that the Remove would play a second-rate team against the Third; but any Remove team could walk all over Tubb & Co., and the fags had not the dim shadow of a ghost of a chance.

Bunter did not know a lot about football, but even Bunter knew that. Even with Bunter himself in the team, the Remove could hardly have been beaten by the Third. And there would not, of course, be such duds as Bunter playing.

So all this was quite mysterious to Toddy.

Only one thing was clear—that Billy Bunter was considering following the Bouncer's bad example of making bets on the matches. Peter was prepared to clear that idea out of Bunter's fat head at once and without delay.

He looked in the study cupboard for a cricket stump. If Bunter needed bringing up in the way he should go, Peter was ready to lay on the cricket stump to any extent required.

"I mean to say, it's like a tip straight from the horse's mouth," went on Bunter. "I fancy the Third will win. Anyhow, it's worth risking a bob at long odds. The difficulty is that I haven't a bob."

"There's another difficulty," said Peter.

"What's that?" asked Bunter.

"One Bouncer in the Remove is one too many. We're not going to start another in this study." Peter spotted a cricket stump, rose to his feet, and reached for it. "Now, stand up, Bunter!"

"Eh? What for?"

"How can I whop you while you're sitting down? Talk sense!"

"Look here, you beast—"

"Are you getting up?"

"Beast! I say, Toddy—"

"Will you get-off that chair?"

"No!" roared Bunter.
 "I'll help you."
 "Look here, you interfering beast—
 Yarooooo!" roared Bunter, as Peter
 grasped the back of the chair and
 tipped it.

Bunter got off in quite a hurry, land-
 ing on his fat hands and knees.
 Thus he was favourably placed for
 Peter's purpose. The cricket stump
 went up and came down.

Whack!
 "Yoo-hoop!" roared Bunter.
 "Still thinking of backing your fancy
 on Remove matches?" asked Peter.

"Ow! Yes, you beast! Wow!"
 Whack!
 "Yarooooo!"
 Bunter bounded up and bounded to
 the door, but a grasp closed on his collar
 before he reached it; then the cricket
 stump smote for the third time.

Whack!
 "Ow!" roared Bunter. "Wow!"
 "Backing your fancy, old fat man?"
 grinned Peter.
 "Ow! Yes—"
 Whack!

"I mean, no!" yelled Bunter.
 "Leggo! I was jig-jug-joking! Ow!
 Leggo, you beast! Yarooooo! I—I
 ain't doing anything of the sort, Peter!"
 "Sure?" asked Peter. "I don't mind
 giving you a few more now I've started.
 In fact, I'm just getting my hand in!"

"Ow! Will you leggo?"
 "Quite dropped the idea?" asked
 Peter.
 "Ow! Yes! Wow! Yes! Beast!"
 "That's all right then! Leave it
 dropped—if you pick it up again, look
 out for the cricket stump! We don't
 encourage sportsmen in this study!"
 grinned Peter. "You can leave that
 kind of thing to Smithy until he gets
 sacked for it! Let me catch you making
 bets on the matches, you fat frog, and
 I'll give you a dozen like that—"

Whack!
 "Yarooooo!"
 Bunter shot into the passage. Peter
 put back the cricket stump, grinning.
 He felt it his duty to discourage the fat
 sportsman, and he had done his duty,
 with a rather heavy hand!

Bunter, as he rolled away squeaking,

would have been satisfied with a much
 less doubtful study-mate.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter On The Make!

"SMITHY, old chap—"
 "Buzz off!" said the Bounder
 tersely.

"I wanted to ask you—"
 "Ask Mauly—he's soft!" said the
 Bounder sarcastically.

Billy Bunter gave Herbert Vernon-
 Smith an indignant blink. He had found
 Smithy in the Rag, after tea, and no
 sooner had he opened his mouth, than
 Smithy jumped to the conclusion that
 he wanted to borrow something.

The way fellows jumped to that con-
 clusion, when Bunter addressed them,
 was very irritating to Bunter! He did
 not know why they did it! But they
 did!

"If you think I want to borrow
 anything of you, Herbert Vernon-
 (Continued on next page.)

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 TREADWELL, Foleshill; C. TROTTER,
 Tonbridge; R. TROUGHTON, Leeds, 12; J.
 TURNER, Ramsgate; V. H. TURNER, Dept-
 ford, S.E.8; JOHN TURRINGTON, Laken-
 head.

H. T. VANE, Northwood Hills; K. L.
 VERITY, Bramhall; F. P. VERNEY, Totten-
 ham, N.17.

GORDON WALTERS, Nottingham; TOM
 WATT, Glasgow, W.3; S. WELBELOVE,
 Balham, S.W.12; J. WEST, Leicester; S.
 WHEELER, Romford; NORMAN WHER-
 AT, Bath; J. M. WHITEHEAD, Oldham;
 P. G. WILKINS, Little Cheverell; A.
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THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,602.

Smith—"said the fat Owl, with a great deal of dignity.

"Don't you?"

"No!" hooted Bunter.

"Then what are you bothering me for, you fat ass? Roll off, anyhow!"

"The fact is, Mauly has lent me half-a-crown!" said Bunter. "I never mentioned what it was for—he, he, he! Mauly can trust a fellow, Smithy."

"He can trust you not to let him see his half-crown again!" agreed Smithy. "Anybody could trust you to that extent."

"Beast! I mean, look here, old chap. I wanted to ask you about the footer! You know all about it, you know," said Bunter.

"What about the footer, ass?" asked Vernon-Smith, staring. That was not a topic that usually interested Bunter.

Bunter's interest in Soccer was chiefly confined to dodging compulsory practice, as often as he could.

"I mean about the match on Saturday?" said Bunter. "Think the Third have any chance of pulling it off?"

"Of course not!"

"I mean to say, a lot of the men are standing out," said Bunter. "Hazel's going to keep goal, I hear, instead of Squiff, and Bull and Linley won't be backs, and Bob Cherry's out, and I expect you will be—"

"Catch me playing the Third!" said Smithy disdainfully. "It's all right for practice, but it's not footer. But what are you bothering about it for, fat-head?"

"Well I wanted to know what you thought," said Bunter astutely. "You don't think the Third might pull it off?"

"I know they couldn't."

"Suppose a chap offered to back the Third, would you take him on?"

"Like a shot!" said the Bounder, laughing. "I'd give any man ten to one, if he was fool enough to put his money on Tubb's scrubby gang!"

"I'll take you!" said Bunter.

"What?"

"I say, Skinner, you hold the stakes, will you?" went on the fat Owl, blinking round at Harold Skinner.

Skinner stared at him.

"Mauly's half-crown burning a hole in your pocket?" he asked.

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"Is the fat ass potty?" asked the Bounder in wonder. "What on earth's put it into your silly head that that mob of fags might beat the Remove on Saturday, Bunter?"

"Well, I'm taking a chance, you know, like a sportsman!" explained Bunter. "I haven't heard something that the other fellows haven't heard—"

"Eh?"

"Nothing of that kind, you know! I'm simply taking a chance in a sporting way," said the fat Owl. "I think the Third may pull it off, so why shouldn't I back my fancy?"

"You know they can't!" said Skinner, staring at the fat Owl. "They won't pot the pill once, and they'll be beaten by as many goals as the Remove choose to pile up! You know it as well as I do. So what are you getting at?"

"Money talks!" said Bunter calmly.

He produced a half-crown, lately the property of Lord Mauleverer. He held it out to Skinner.

"Ten to one—that's twenty-five bob for you to put up, Smithy!" he said. "Trot it out!"

"Don't be a fool!" snapped Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Roll away and don't talk rot!"

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Billy Bunter did not roll away. He favoured the Bounder with a disdainful and indignant blink.

"Afraid to put up your money?" he asked.

The Bounder gave him a glare.

Smithy dabbled in betting on the matches, as much to keep up his character of a "bad hat" as anything else. But he laid his bets among the sporting fraternity, and he most decidedly was not inclined to lay bets with a fat ass like Bunter. Had Skinner, or Hazeldene, or Angel of the Fourth made that offer, Smithy would have closed on it at once. But he was not going to "blag" with a fat fathead like Bunter.

"Cold feet?" jeered Bunter. "Call yourself a sportsman, Smithy? You offer ten to one, and then back out when a man takes you on! Yah!"

"Get out, you fat fool!" snapped the Bounder. "Go and blow your half-crown on jam tarts—that's more in your line!"

"Oh, all right!" said Bunter. "I'll find somebody else who isn't afraid to back up his own words!"

The Bounder set his lips. He had spoken unthinkingly, never dreaming that the fat Owl of the Remove was thinking, for once, of dabbling in "blagging." But what he had said, he had said; and it was difficult to retreat. He had said that he would give any man ten to one, and Bunter had taken it on, and it was unpleasant to be told that he was afraid to back up his own words.

"You cheeky, fat chump—" he growled angrily.

"Skinner heard what you said—didn't you, Skinner?" hooted Bunter.

"Now he wants to back out—"

"Why not bag his half-crown if he wants to lose it, Smithy?" said Skinner with a laugh. "It will be a lesson to the fat chump!"

"I'm ready!" said Bunter. "Smithy ain't! Some sportsman! Yah!"

Smithy gave him a black look. The Bounder had plenty of money, and did not care straw if he lost ten half-crowns—and certainly he did not want to bag one from Bunter. But what he had said, he had said—and he was going to stand by it.

"You blithering bloater!" he snapped. "You'll wish you'd spent it on tarts, after the game on Saturday. But I'll take you on if you hold me to it."

"Skinner holds stakes!" said Bunter.

"Bother you, all right."

Skinner, as stake-holder, took possession of Bunter's half-crown, and two more, with a pound note added, from Smithy. Billy Bunter rolled away grinning—leaving Smithy scowling. Smithy fancied himself as a "bad hat"—but there was something ridiculous in "blagging" with a fatuous ass like Bunter, and he was irritated and annoyed.

Bunter, however, was happily satisfied.

Bunter knew what Smithy did not know—yet, that the most wonderful junior footballer who had ever kicked a Soccer ball at Greyfriars was going to play for the Third on Saturday! Bunter was on the make!

True, Soccer was not a one-man game. But the Remove would not be at full strength—they were giving the Third a sporting chance. With such a man as Tracy in the ranks, that sporting chance was likely to be turned into a certainty! Bunter knew that Tracy thought so, and that George Tubb thought so. It was well worth the risk of a half-crown, at such tremendous odds as ten to one—especially as it was Mauly's half-crown!

Bunter felt that he had been fear-

fully astute—indeed, the complete sportsman! It would be rather a blow to lose Mauly's half-crown, if the result of the game was as all the Remove naturally expected! On the other hand, it would be simply gorgeous to bag ten half-crowns, if Gilbert Tracy succeeded in his object of humiliating his Form by a fag defeat! As for anything of an unscrupulous nature in this sporting transaction, Billy Bunter did not think of that! A fellow couldn't think of everything!

The Owl of the Remove rolled out into the quad, in a mood of happy satisfaction. He was so concentrated on his sporting transaction, and its probable happy result, that he had forgotten Tubb of the Third, and the fact that that youth was probably keeping an eye open for him.

But he was reminded of Tubb!

Tubb's eye fell on his in the quad. Tubb was discussing football—and his new recruit—with Paget and Bolsover minor of the Third, when he spotted Bunter rolling by with a happy grin on his fat features. This was a chance for which George Tubb had been watching all day.

He left his friends, and rushed after Bunter! A boot landing on the tightest trousers at Greyfriars School apprised Bunter that Tubb of the Third was on the spot, and on the warpath!

Thud!

"Yoooop!" roared Bunter, as he tottered.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Paget and Bolsover minor. "Give him another, Tubby!"

Tubby was already giving Bunter another, and another after that.

Billy Bunter roared and flew—and Tubby, victoriously following him up landed another, and another, and yet another. Having thus repaid that booting outside the tuckshop with interest, Tubb of the Third gave up the chase, and rejoined the other fags, grinning.

Billy Bunter very nearly charged after Tubb, to hand him what he deserved for booting a Remove man. But not quite! He had a jolly good mind to boot that cheeky fag all over the quad! But, on reflection, he found that he had a jollier good mind not to—and he didn't!

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Is Pleased!

HARRY WHARTON came into the Rag after tea on Friday, with a paper in his hand.

Generally, when a football list was pinned up in the Rag, there was keen interest to look at it. But on the present occasion, the interest was not keen. It was a list for the match with the Third Form—a game that was a trifle light as air, in the estimation of the Remove footballers.

The Remove played Soccer, as Bob Cherry expressed it, with the accent on the "played." Even a match with the Fourth Form was regarded as a walk-over in advance; and a match with the Third was hardly considered a match at all. It was as good as a pick-up game for practice, and it gave the lesser lights of the Remove a chance of showing what they could do; but that was all there was in it.

The mighty men of the Form stood down as a matter of course—indeed, the Bounder would have been quite ratty had he been asked to play. He would have refused unpleasantly. Harry Wharton was going to captain the



"Afraid to put up your money, eh?" said Bunter, favouring Vernon-Smith with a disdainful and indignant blink. "Get out, you fat fool!" snapped the Bounder. "Oh, all right!" said Bunter. "I'll find somebody else who isn't afraid to back up his own words!"

team; but he was going to be almost the only really good man in it. But the second and third-rate men were more than good enough to walk all over the Third. Hazel, in goal, was not a patch on Squiff; but he could stop anything that the heroes of the Third could send him, without over-exerting himself. And the rest were more or less on a par with Hazeldene.

So when Wharton pinned up the paper, some of the fellows gathered round to look at it, but more didn't.

Some of the fellows were keen to see their names there; but, at the same time not fearfully flattered to find them there. There was not much glory to be acquired by beating the Third. A defeat, of course, was not thought of—that was not within the realms of the possible. The list ran:

P. Hazeldene; Bolsover ma., T. Dutton; T. Redwing, O. Kipps, M. Desmond; W. Wibley, F. Stott, H. Wharton, H. Skinner, S. J. Snoop.

Of the eleven men Harry Wharton was first-class, and Dutton and Tom Redwing were good. The others were more than good enough for a match with the fags.

The fellow who was keenest on reading that list was Billy Bunter! Bunter turned his eyes, and his spectacles on it at once, and grinned as he perused it.

That list of names showed that the captain of the Remove had heard nothing, so far, of "Tracy's latest."

Had he been aware that that marvellous footballer was going to be opposed to his own Form on Saturday afternoon, certainly he would not have put Hazel in goal! Even Squiff, the mighty man from New South Wales, who was as good a goalie as could be found in the Lower School, did not find it easy to stop shots from

Gilbert Tracy. Hazel would be simply nowhere, when Tracy began to shoot.

Billy Bunter, no doubt, had the patriotism of a Remove man; but he was not thinking of patriotism at the moment. He was thinking of that bet which he had badgered the Bounder into taking on. And the sight of that list made the fat Owl feel that Smithy's twenty-five shillings were as good as in his pocket.

"He, he, he!" was Bunter's comment on the list.

"Nothing to cackle at, old fat man!" said Harry. "Your name's not there."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"I see you've got me down in goal!" said Hazel. "I can't say I'm fearfully keen on sticking between the posts for an hour and a half with nothing to do."

"Oh, the Third will give you something to do," said Harry. "But if you'd rather stand out, Hazel, I'll find another man."

"Oh, I'll play!" said Hazel ungraciously. "I think it's rather thick to be stuck in a game like this, and left out at St. Jude's, that's all."

"He, he, he!" came from Bunter. "You'll be all right for St. Jude's, Hazel, if you come through this! He, he, he!"

Hazel stared round at the fat Owl. "What do you mean, you benighted ass?" he snapped. "Do you think there's a man in the Third who can get past me in goal?"

"I fancy so!" chuckled Bunter. "You wait and see!"

"Some of the Third aren't bad," said Harry. "Young Paget is a good forward, and Bolsover minor plays a good game."

"So he does," agreed Bolsover major, "and Tubb isn't bad. Of course, they haven't an earthly; but it will be a game, anyhow."

"He, he, he!"

"What is that fat ass going off like an alarm-clock for?" asked Bob Cherry. "Does he fancy that he knows anything about football?"

"He, he, he! I know what I know!" grinned Bunter. "You'll have plenty to do in goal, Hazel, and I wish you the joy of it! He, he, he!"

"If the ball gets past me, I'll eat it!" said Hazel.

"He, he, he!" cacknated Bunter. "You'll find it tough, you know. And if you eat it every time it passes you, there'll be a good many new balls wanted in the game! He, he, he!"

A good many of the fellows looked at Bunter curiously. His interest in a football match was unusual, and his remarks were surprising. True, he was never expected to talk sense, especially on the subject of Soccer; still, his evident belief that the Third, for once, were going to give the Remove a real tussle, was singular.

"So you think the fags are going to score goals this time, Bunter?" asked Harry.

"I fancy so," grinned Bunter.

"And why, you fat image?"

"That's telling!" grinned Bunter.

"He, he, he! Just you wait a bit, and you'll see! They've got rather a good man! He, he, he!"

"Anybody heard of a budding International in the Third Form here?" asked Bob Cherry, glancing round. "Who's the man, Bunter?"

"Oh, nobody!" said Bunter hastily.

"I don't know anything about it, of course. Not a thing! I'd have told you fellows if I knew, of course! I never heard Tubb talking to him—"

"Him? Who?"

"Oh, nobody."

"You never heard Tubb talking to nobody?" asked Bob.

"I—I mean—" stammered Bunter. "Well, what do you mean?" "Oh, nothing!"

Billy Bunter realised that he was talking too much—rather a usual failing with Bunter! It was not too late for the captain of the Remove to make changes in the list! The fat Owl rolled away, leaving the other fellows staring after him.

"Is that fat chump batchy, or what?" asked Bob. "Has he gone off his fat rocker?"

"Is he ever quite on it?" grunted Hazel.

"Blessed if I can make him out," said Peter Todd. "He was talking rot like this yesterday, and gabbling about laying bets on the Third—"

"What?" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "I took the cricket stump to him, and he dropped the idea," explained Peter. "But he seems to have the idea in his head that the Third are going to pull it off this time, goodness knows why. He seems to have heard Tubb talking to somebody, and got the idea from what he said."

Harry Wharton laughed. "Well, if Tubb's got a man who can shoot goals against the Remove, Tubb's welcome to all the goals," he said. "I haven't heard of a wonderful man in the Third myself! But if they've really found a good man, all the better—it will put a spot of life into the game." "And with that, the captain of the Remove dismissed the matter from his mind. He was to be reminded of it, quite unpleasantly, the following day.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Mysterious!

"WHAT'S the jolly old joke?" asked Bob Cherry. There was a chuckle in the Rag.

The Famous Five came into that compartment after class on Saturday morning and found three fags of the Third there—standing before the Remove football list, looking at it, and grinning. George Tubb, Bolsover minor, and

Spencer Percival Paget of the Third seemed to find something entertaining in that list of Remove men.

Harry Wharton & Co glanced at them.

Of the five, only Wharton was booked for football that afternoon, and the other four members of the famous Co. were discussing a bike spin. Remove matches, as a rule, were worth watching, but a game with the Third Form fags was not likely to draw many spectators.

"Some team!" Paget was remarking as the Remove fellows came in.

"Lot of duds!" remarked Bolsover minor. "My brother's pretty good, though."

"Sez you!" said Paget. "Look here, Paget—"

"Don't rag, you two!" said Tubb. "That team's all right. Just what I expected to see. They think they can beat the Third with any old crowd! Well, let 'em think so!"

And the fags chuckled. And they looked round, grinning, as Bob Cherry asked what the joke was.

It was, in fact, no end of a joke to Tubb & Co.—which they did not intend to share with the Remove just yet!

Not a word had been said outside Tubb's own select circle about the Third's new and remarkable recruit.

Tracy had pointed out that it was no business of the Remove, how Tubb made up his team, and Tubb agreed that it wasn't. Moreover, he wanted his presence in the ranks of the Third to come as a surprise to the captain of his Form—and Tubb cheerfully agreed to give Wharton that surprise. He was, in fact, going to enjoy the looks on the Remove faces when they saw that tremendous goal-getter in the fag side.

Wharton was putting up a second-rate team to play the Third. That, Tubb considered, was like his check—just Remove swank! He would wake up when he saw Tubb's latest recruit!

So it had been kept dark—very dark. Billy Bunter, as it happened, knew; but Billy Bunter, for weird reasons of his own, was also keeping it dark. It was going to be a sort of bombshell!

"Joke?" repeated Tubb, his grin

extending almost from ear to ear. "That team of yours is the joke! Look at it and laugh!"

"You cheeky young ass!" said Bob. "That team will walk all over the Third, and pile up all the goals they want. What do you mean?"

"If I were a betting man like that swab Smithy in your Form, I'd lay you two to one!" said Tubb. "On the Third, you know."

Bob Cherry laughed. "And if I were a betting man, like that swab Smithy, I'd lay you ten to one that you don't get the ball through once," he answered.

"Think Hazeldene will stop it?" grinned Tubb.

"Every time, and a few over."

"Well, I'll be glad to see him do it. We've got rather a goal-getter in the Third," said Tubb, with a wink at his friends.

"Budding Internationals, the lot of you, I've no doubt!" said Johnny Bull sarcastically. "Any of you going to play for England this winter?"

"Well, you wait and see!" said Tubb darkly. "Kick-off at two, Wharton! Put on your best shooting-boots! You'll need 'em!"

"I'll remember," said the captain of the Remove, laughing. "And I'll tell all the men to pull up their socks. I know we shall have to go all out when the Third begin on us in real earnest."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "You can cackle," said Tubb. "But if you jolly well knew—"

"If I knew what?" "Oh, nothing! You'll know presently!"

"What about telling him now?" asked Bolsover minor.

"You shut up, young Bolsover! If he thinks that bunch of duds can beat the Third, let him get on with it!"

"Yes, rather!" agreed Paget. "It's his own business, not ours. Let him get on with it. You talk too much, young Bolsover!"

"What on earth is the jolly old mystery?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, staring at the three fags. "Have you suddenly discovered a football genius in (Continued on next page.)

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the Third, like that chap Tracy in our Form?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Tubb & Co., with great hilarity. And they went out of the Rag, chortling.

Bob stared after them.

"Blessed if I can make this out!" he said. "Do those young asses really think that they can beat the Remove? They couldn't beat us if we played Bunter—or three or four Bunters!"

"They seem to think so," said Nugent. "They may have been picking up some tips from Tracy. I heard that he was at practice with them yesterday."

"The tipfulness must have been terrific if it will cause the absurd fags to beat the Remove!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Not much danger!" said Harry Wharton, with a laugh.

"I say, you fellows!" Billy Bunter rolled into the Rag, and blinked rather anxiously at the Famous Five. "I say, has young Tubb told you?"

"Told us what?" asked Harry.

"I mean, I just saw them, laughing like anything, and I thought they might have told you," explained Bunter.

"What was there to tell us, ass?"

"Oh! Nothing, if they haven't!" said Bunter. "It's all right! There ain't anything to tell you, of course. How could there be?"

"Does that run in your family, Bunter?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Eh—what?"

"Insanity!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Well, what are you burbling about?" demanded Bob. "What was it you fancied that young Tubb might have told us?"

"Nothing, old chap! Naturally he wouldn't till the match," said Bunter. "I thought he might have, but, of course, he wouldn't. I mean, it's not too late to make changes in the team."

"Who's thinking of making changes in the team?"

"Oh, nobody! But, of course, Wharton could, if he liked, if he knew that—"

"If he knew what?" roared Bob.

"Oh, nothing!"

"Mad as a hatter!" said Johnny Bull.

"The madfulness appears to be truly terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Oh, really, Inky! You ain't making changes in the team, Wharton?" asked the fat Owl anxiously.

"No, ass! Why should I?"

"Of course, why should you?" agreed Bunter, grinning. "No reason at all, old chap, that I know of. Still, they couldn't beat the Remove at full strength, that stands to reason, doesn't it?"

"They can't beat the Remove at all, you fat chump!"

"He, he, he!"

"Is there something on in the Third, and has that Peeping Tom spied it out?" asked Bob Cherry, in wonder. "They can't have got hold of a terrific footballer this term, like Tracy—it can't have happened in the Third as well as in the Remove—"

"He, he, he!" gurgled Bunter. "Oh crikey! He, he, he!"

"What are you he-he-heing about?" roared Bob.

"Nothing, old chap—nothing at all! I ain't going to tell you—I mean, there ain't anything to tell. I never heard anything behind the armchair—besides, I never was behind an armchair at all! I'm not likely to stick behind an armchair because of a scrubby fag like Tubb! No fear! I'd boot him out of

the Remove passage as soon as look at him!"

The Famous Five gazed at Bunter. Evidently he had heard something from behind an armchair. That was not surprising—Billy Bunter heard all sorts of things in all sorts of places that were not intended for his fat ears. But why he fancied from what he had overheard that the fags were going to beat the Remove was really mysterious.

"It's all right," said Bunter reassuringly. "I ain't going to tell you, and there ain't anything to tell. Besides, you'll know soon enough! So will Smithy—he, he, he! Smithy will have to pay up!"

"What!"

"I—I mean, I haven't got a bet on with Smithy," added Bunter anxiously. "Don't you get telling Toddy anything of that kind—I don't want a row with Toddy. If Smithy likes to swank about backing the Remove at ten to one, why shouldn't a fellow take him at his word?"

"You fat villain!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Boot him!" said Johnny Bull.

Billy Bunter departed hastily from the Rag without waiting to be booted.

After the Famous Five had gone out, however, the fat Owl came cautiously back, and blinked at the football list through his big spectacles.

To his relief, no changes had been made in it. Had Harry Wharton been aware of what was "on" in the Third, and of the tremendous goal-getter that the Remove had to face that afternoon, he would not have been likely to leave that list unaltered. Hazel, in goal, would be about as useful as a sack of coke when Tracy began to shoot!

With the Remove side at full strength, even Tubb's wonderful recruit could hardly have brought off a win—Soccer not being a one-man game. But Wharton was evidently still in a state of blissful ignorance, for the football list stood unchanged. And Billy Bunter—quite forgetting the patriotism of a Remove man—chuckled at the prospect of the Bunder paying up.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise On The Football Field!

HARRY WHARTON glanced at Tracy in the changing-room.

The footballers were there to change, and Tracy, it seemed, had come there for the same purpose. He was, at all events, changing for football.

The captain of the Remove supposed that he was getting some practice that afternoon, and gave him no special attention. Neither did he give any special attention to the fact that Tubb & Co. were grinning at one another.

It was clear that some great jest was on in the ranks of the Third, but he was not interested in the same.

Tracy took his time over changing, and he still had his football boots to lace when the juniors went out and down to the field.

Hobson of the Shell, who was acting as referee, was already on the ground. There were a number of spectators gathering—nearly all belonging to the Third. Few other fellows had any interest in the game.

Bob Cherry and his chums had already gone out on their bikes. Vernon-Smith had gone off on one of his half-holiday excursions—probably out of bounds. Squiff, who certainly would have been in goal had Harry Wharton known what Billy Bunter could have

told him, had gone out with Tom Brown and Peter Todd.

The doughty men of the Remove were scattered far and wide, and were not available, even had the captain of the Form known that he required their services. But he did not know even yet.

Tubb & Co. were keeping their cheery secret right up to the last minute. They were anticipating, with tremendous glee, the look on Harry Wharton's face when he learned it.

"Lost one of your men, Tubby?" asked Hobson of the Shell, as the footballers went on to the field. Only ten men of the Third were visible.

"Just coming!" answered Tubb. Some of the fellows looked round.

A figure in football shirt and shorts was seen speeding down to the field.

But it was not a Third Former. It was Gilbert Tracy of the Remove. Why he was coming there was a mystery to the Remove men; they did not think of guessing. But the happy fags grinned and winked at one another.

"What the dickens does that man want here?" asked Hazel. "You haven't told him he may be wanted, Wharton?"

"Not likely!"

"Well, then, what—"

"What do you want here, Tracy?" called out the captain of the Remove, as the new junior came on the field.

Tracy looked at him and laughed.

"I'm here to play footer," he answered.

"You're not! Get out!"

"Are you selecting Tubb's team for him?" asked Tracy coolly.

"Tubb's team? What do you mean?" snapped Harry.

"I mean that I'm playing for the Third. Any objection?"

Harry Wharton gave quite a jump.

He was taken utterly by surprise. Never for a moment had anything of the kind crossed his mind. Had he thought of it, had he even dreamed of it, he would have taken his measures. It was too late now—with Hobson standing ready to blow the whistle, and the good men of the Remove all, or nearly all, out of gates.

"You!" he almost gasped. "You playing for the Third! You're a Remove man!"

"Do you want me in the Remove team?"

"You know I don't!"

"Do you expect me to sit and twiddle my thumbs while you're playing football?" asked Tracy sarcastically. "I think I'm entitled to pick up a game where I can, if I'm not wanted in my Form team. Don't you?"

Harry Wharton did not answer that. He stared blankly at Tracy. The other Removites stared at him.

"Oh, my hat!" said Hazel. Hazel flattered himself that he was as good as Sampson Quincy Ifley Field in goal, but he seemed to be smitten by a doubt now that he saw what he had to face.

"Dirty trick!" growled Bolsover major. "Chap lining up against his own Form—yah!"

"Rotten trick!" said Wibley.

Tracy raised his eyebrows.

"I don't see it," he said. "I've offered to play for the Remove. I'm keen to play. Wharton's told me that I'm barred from Remove football for the whole season. I can't be expected to chuck football, I suppose?"

"I should jolly well think not!" exclaimed Tubb warmly. "If you don't want the man, Wharton, I jolly well do! Think a footballer like Tracy was going to stand on his hind legs and watch you play, or what?"

Harry Wharton stood silent.

Tracy was within his rights to offer his services elsewhere when he was barred from Remove games. Tubb was within his rights to play him, when he was dropped, definitely and for good, by his own captain. Wharton could raise no objection without looking like a disgruntled ass bent on playing dog-in-the-manger.

But his feelings were deep, and bitter anger and resentment welled up in his breast. He had been tricked, that was plain enough. Had he known that a goal-getter like Tracy was in the opposing ranks, he would not, of course, have thought of playing so weak a team.

It had been kept dark intentionally to enable Gilbert to inflict a humiliating defeat on his own Form, as a knock back at the captain who had dropped him. This was Gilbert's way of hitting back.

Tubb & Co., like the unthinking fags they were, had played into Tracy's cunning hands. They had been like wax in those hands. But Tracy, he had planned to keep the secret till it was time for the whistle to blow; he had even delayed in the changing-room, and arrived last on the field, to make all sure; he had planned it all, and he had succeeded.

"You cad!" said Harry, at last.

Tracy shrugged his shoulders.

"A cad for picking up a game where I can get one?" he asked. "How do you make that out? You had me if you wanted me. If you didn't, why shouldn't you leave me to a skipper who does?"

"So this is the secret those young asses were keeping!" said Harry, with

a deep breath. "This is what that fat ass Bunter meant! He knew! You rotter! You've kept it dark till the last minute!"

"I didn't think you'd be interested," said Tracy blandly. "You're not generally very interested in anything I do."

Hobson of the Shell cut in.

"Look here, time," he said. "Are you getting going? Why don't you line up? Is that Remove man playing on the other side, Wharton? Lending them a man?"

"That's it," said Tracy, grinning. "Wharton's lending Tubb a man he doesn't want."

"Well, get a move on!" said the referee. "This is a football match, ain't it, not a conversation?"

Harry Wharton cast a look round the field. At that juncture it would have been an awkward business to make changes in the team. But if he thought of it, there was nothing in it; for not a single Remove man was in sight, excepting Billy Bunter, rolling down to the field with a fat grin on his face.

Wharton's eyes lingered on the fat Owl for a moment grimly.

He knew now what Bunter's babbling and gabbling meant. The Owl of the Remove had found this out and kept it dark. He had something to say to Bunter later, and something to do. But that was no present help.

Tracy was lining up with the Third-taking centre-forward. There was nothing for the Remove men to do, but to line up also and make the best of it.

Many of the team did not share Wharton's feelings on the subject, but their confidence in themselves was little

comfort to their captain. They could walk all over the Third, but Gilbert Tracy would go through them like a knife through cheese, and Hazel, in goal, was about as likely to stop his shots as if they had been shots from a rifle. Harry Wharton was the only really good man in the side, and at his best he was hardly half so good as Tracy, as he freely admitted. The fellow was not merely a born footballer; he was like a magician at the game. And before it started, Wharton had a grim presentiment how it was going to end.

But he set his lips, and resolved, at least, to play the game of his life, and get the best he could out of that patchy team. Seldom, or never, had he been so keen to come out ahead in a game as in that match with the fags of the Third Form.

Hobson blew the whistle.

The ball was kicked off, and Wharton led a rush. He hardly knew how Tracy got the ball away from him, but there was a roar from Third Form men round the field, as the new recruit ran it up to goal, winding through halves and backs as if they were not there, and slammed it in at Hazel, who missed it by a yard.

"Goal!" yelled the Third. "Goal!"

And that was only the beginning.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

Defeat!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH strolled in at the gates of Greyfriars, and walked towards the House; and then, as a sound of distant shouting fell upon his ears, changed his direction, and went down to the football ground.

That shouting reminded him of the fag match which he had forgotten. And it surprised him, too, for there was never anything to shout about in a fag footer match, or to draw the crowd that he could see round the field.

Greatly surprised, the Bounder pushed into the crowd to see what was going on.

That game had started with a dozen fags, and Billy Bunter watching. But during its progress it had attracted attention. Third and Second were there in a swarm; Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Fourth had arrived; there were a good many Shell fellows, and even some of the Fifth. Never before had such a game drawn such an audience.

"Goal!" came a roar. "Good old Tracy! Goal!"

Which made Smithy jump. He knew that Tracy was not playing for the Remove. It had not occurred to him, any more than to any other Remove man, that Gilbert might play for the Third.

"What the dickens is going on?" asked Smithy, as Billy Bunter grinned round at him.

"He, he, he!" was Bunter's reply. "I say, Smithy, they're six to one! He, he, he!"

"That's nothing in a game with the Third!" answered Smithy, staring. "They could score sixteen, if they liked."

"He, he, he! Six for the Third!" grinned Bunter.

"Wha-at?"

"You see, Tracy—"

"Tracy?"

The Bounder saw him the next moment. He stared blankly at the Remove man in the ranks of the Third Form.

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"Oh gad!" he ejaculated.

The score stood at 6-1 half-way through the second half. Smithy did not need to ask who had taken the six. Hazel was quite capable of stopping Third Form shooting; if Tubb or Paget had got past him once, that would have been the limit.

The Bounder knew now why the crowd had gathered. Tracy was always worth watching, and they had come to watch Tracy. Not a fellow in the school liked him personally, but they admired his football, and did not want to miss it. And the fags, at least, were rejoicing in the prospect of seeing the Remove beaten by a fag team.

That they were getting beaten was obvious. With the score at 6-1, it was too late for the Remove to hope to pull up, even if they had a chance of pulling up; instead of which, matters were likely to go from bad to worse.

Smithy scowled.

"The fool!" he muttered. He was referring to the captain of the Remove. "That's the man he wants to leave out of the matches! I hope he likes seeing him guy his own Form on the football field! The fool!"

"Only another twenty minutes!" said Billy Bunter cheerfully. "I want to see Skinner when they come off! He, he, he!"

"Skinner looks as if he will have to be carried off!" said the Bounder sardonically. "What a fool to play a fooling dud like Skinner with a man like that on the other side! A real Remove team would walk all over that crew, Tracy and all! Didn't Wharton know?"

"Nobody knew till Tracy turned up on the field," said Russell of the Remove. "It was rather a rotten trick to spring a man like that on him! The fags seem to think it rather a lark, but—"

"Well, it is a lark!" sneered the Bounder. "The fags will be able to brag now that they've beaten the Remove. Wharton ought to have known. It's just one of Tracy's rotten tricks, and he knows the fellow well enough."

"Well, I suppose the fellow had a right to play if Tubb asked him—"

"Rot! He fixed up the whole thing and made them keep it dark till it was too late to put paid to his trickery!" snapped the Bounder. "I'd have been playing if I'd known, and the score wouldn't stand at 6-1 then. Soccer isn't a one-man game; a few good men on our side, and Tracy would be nowhere!"

"Looks as if it is this time!" said Russell. "By gum, he's a good man, Smithy! Not a man can touch him, even Wharton!"

It was true enough. Soccer was not a one-man game; but in the peculiar circumstances, the match had dwindled to something like a personal contest between Tubb's new recruit and the captain of the Remove. And of the two, Tracy was the better man!

"Only another quarter of an hour!" Billy Bunter, at least, was quite cheerful about it. "Poor old Skinner looks winded, so does Snoop. I say, Bolsover major is charging about like a mad elephant, ain't he? He, he, he! What a crew! Look at Hazel scowling! He fancies he can keep goal better than Squiff! Looks like it, don't it? He, he, he!"

"Oh, shut up!" grunted Smithy. "If that idiot Wharton had put in a few good men—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came a cheery roar. "How's it going?"

Bob Cherry and his comrades had come in from their bike spin, and looked

in to see the finish of the fag match. Like the Bounder, they were surprised to see such a crowd gathered on Little Side.

The Bounder scowled round at the Co. "You're in time for the climax!" he jeered. "First time you've had a chance of seeing a measly crew of fags beat the Remove!"

"Eh? What rot!" said Bob. "Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's Tracy doing there?"

"Bagging goals for the Third!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"The hatfulness is terrific!" ejaculated Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Tracy!" said Frank Nugent blankly.

"Oh!"

"Tracy playing for Tubb!" said Johnny Bull. "I never knew—"

"Oh, it's a little surprise they sprung on Wharton at the last moment!" said Vernon-Smith. "Tracy's set out to make him understand what he's chucking away! He's doing it, too!"

"By gum!" said Bob, with a deep breath. "So that's what those fags were cackling about! They were keeping this dark!"

"He, he, he!"—from Bunter.

Bob glared round at the fat Owl.

"And that's what you were burbling about, you fat Owl!" he exclaimed.

"You jolly well knew!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"That's it!" said Nugent, with a nod.

"Bunter knew; that's what he spied out, I suppose. And he never let on."

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Why didn't you let on, you fat fool?" exclaimed Bob. "If we'd known we'd have put the stopper on this easily enough. Why didn't you tell us you knew, you blithering, bloated bloater?"

"Oh, I—I never knew, of—of course!" stammered Bunter. "I've told you already that I never dodged behind the armchair, and never heard Tubb—"

"Bunter knew!" exclaimed the Bounder. "Why, of course he did! That's why he badgered me into making a bet on the match!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"So you made a bet on the match, did you, you frowsy blackguard?" growled Johnny Bull. "Well, you'll lose it, that's one good thing!"

Unheeding him, Vernon-Smith turned towards Bunter with a glitter in his eyes that alarmed the fat Owl of the Remove. Bunter backed away promptly.

"Look here, you keep off, you beast!" he exclaimed. "I never knew! How could I know? If I'd known I should have told you fellows, of course! I never heard a word that Tubb and Tracy said in the study when I was behind the armchair! Besides, I wasn't behind the armchair! I wasn't in the study at all!"

"You fat rascal!" hissed the Bounder. "By gad, my leg pulled by the biggest fool at Greyfriars! I'll—"

"You keep off, you beast!" exclaimed Bunter. "You offered ten to one, didn't you? You jolly well can't back out of it now, with Skinner holding the stakes! I wasn't bound to tell you you were backing a loser, was I? Besides, I never knew! It was quite a—a surprise to me when Tracy turned up here! I hadn't the faintest idea, and— Yarooooooh!"

Smithy had time to land only one before Bunter fled. But it was a good one, and the fat Owl yelled frantically as he departed in haste. Billy Bunter waited for the finish at a safe distance from Herbert Vernon-Smith.

"How's things?" asked Peter Todd, coming up just before the close. "A dozen to nil—what?"

"Not quite so bad as that!" sneered

Smithy. "Six—one, so far; but the Third may take a few more!"

"The Third!" gasped Peter.

Then he saw Tracy, and understood. "There goes Wharton!" exclaimed Nugent.

Almost on the stroke of time the captain of the Remove put the ball in, and the whistle went, with the score at 6-2.

The Remove were overwhelmingly defeated, and Tubb & Co. tired and breathless, winded and gasping, but jubilant and rejoicing, looked like following the example of the ancient classical gentleman, and striking the stars with their sublime heads.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

Get Out!

"I SAY, you fellows, seen Skinner?"

Billy Bunter rolled up to the Remove landing, and blinked at a group of Remove fellows there.

Harry Wharton & Co. did not heed him. Wharton had come up from the changing-room, with a dark and knitted brow, and his friends were not looking their cheeriest.

Downstairs, in the Rag, most of the Remove were talking at once, discussing the football match and its unexpected result. For that, Harry Wharton laid the blame on Gilbert Tracy and his trickery; but most of the juniors seemed more disposed to lay it on Wharton himself.

Some of them asked whether a fellow was expected to cut footer because his skipper had a down on him? They thought it was Tracy's credit that he chose to play in a fag team, rather than frowst about on a half-holiday doing nothing.

Seldom or never had the Remove been so utterly disgruntled. Fellows who had played in the fag match, and fellows who hadn't, were equally and intensely exasperated.

The fact that a strong Remove team could have walked over Tubb & Co., even aided by their wonderful recruit, made no difference to the actual result. A win was a win, and a defeat was a defeat.

Defeat in any other match would not have made the Remove footballers grouse. They could take a beating. But defeat at the hands of the fags was humiliating and ridiculous. It was a thing that ought not to have happened—and never would have happened, had not the captain of the Form barred the best footballer in the Lower School, and driven him to look outside his own Form for a game.

But if nearly all the Remove were excited on that subject, Billy Bunter was not. Bunter's interest in the matter was strictly limited to the fact that Smithy had backed the Remove at ten to one—and lost!

Bunter wanted to see Skinner, who held the stakes. He wanted to collect, before the tuckshop closed. That was important!

Having blinked into the Rag, and found that Skinner was not there, the fat Owl came up to the Remove passage to look for him. "Football jaw" in the Rag did not interest Bunter in the least.

"It's rotten all round!" Bob Cherry was saying, as Bunter came up. "Tracy might have let us know—"

Harry Wharton laughed scornfully.

"That wasn't the cad's game! That would have spoiled his trickery! Do

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you think the fags could have pulled it off, with a good team playing?"

"No! If we'd known—"

"I say, you fellows—"

"The rotter kept it dark—we couldn't know—"

"I say!" Bunter poked Bob Cherry in the ribs. "I say, seen Skinner?"

"Blow Skinner!" growled Bob.

"Don't puncture me, you fat ass! Bother Skinner! I expect he's dead—after playing in a football match!"

"I want to see him—"

"He's gone to his study!" granted Johnny Bull. "Go and see him and shut up!"

"Hold on a minute, Bunter!"

Harry Wharton stepped into the fat Owl's way, with a gleam in his eyes. "You knew the trick that Tracy was up to—"

"I say, I'm in rather a hurry to see Skinner—"

"Why didn't you give me the tip, Bunter?"

"I—I—I forgot!" stammered Bunter. "I mean, I never knew! Tracy never told me anything about it! Why should he? I never heard Tubb talking to him—I wasn't in the study, you know—"

"You fat rascal!" said Harry. "You knew, and you let that rotter play this trick on me! Why?"

"Oh, that's no secret now!" snorted Johnny Bull. "Bunter had a bet on with Smithy—that was why!"

"I—I—I say, I—I never!" gasped Bunter, alarmed by the look on the face of the captain of the Remove. "I mean, I wasn't—that is, I didn't—"

Harry Wharton set his lips hard.

Billy Bunter backed across the landing.

"I say, you fellows, I—I—I never!" he gasped. "I—I wouldn't! I never knew anything about it, for one thing—and I forgot, for another—absolutely forgot the whole thing! Not that I knew it, you know! I suppose you fellows can take my word when I say—Yarooop!"

"Boot him up the passage!" said Johnny Bull.

"Yarooop! I say, you fellows—Yoo-hoop!" roared Billy Bunter.

The captain of the Remove landed the first, and the fat Owl flew. Then the Co. followed suit, and the fat Owl was dribbled up the Remove passage like a football! Wild yells floated back as he went.

By the time the Co. left him for dead, as it were, Billy Bunter felt that he had earned what he was going to collect from Skinner! The way of the fat transgressor was hard.

Harry Wharton went into his study. A junior was seated in the armchair there, smoking a cigarette. It was Tracy.

He gave the captain of the Remove a mocking grin over the smoke of the cigarette.

"Not joining the merry meeting in the Rag?" he asked. "Feeling a bit unpopular at the moment, what?"

Wharton did not reply. He stood looking at Gilbert, with his eyes gleaming and his hands clenched. His temper was very near boiling point.

"You rotter!" he said at last. "You made a fool of me, and got away with it! You made a fool of Quelch, and got away with that, too! You're too deep for him, and too deep for me!"

"Quite!" grinned Gilbert.

Wharton drew a deep breath.

"Get out of this study!" he said.

Gilbert raised his eyebrows.

"Get out of my own study?" he asked. "Isn't that asking rather a lot?"

"I'm not asking you—I'm telling you!" answered Harry Wharton coolly.

"I won't stand you here! Get out!"

"I don't think!"

"You can walk out," said Harry. "or you can go out on your neck! That's your choice—and be quick about it!"

"I'm staying here, thanks!" drawled Gilbert.

"I say, old chap," said Bob Cherry, at the door, "it's his study, you know—"

"I know! Are you going, Tracy?"

"Hardly!"

"I'll help you, then!"

Harry Wharton made a stride at the new junior, sprawling in the armchair, and grasped him.

Gilbert, gritting his teeth, hit out; but he came out of the armchair in a struggling heap, yelling frantically as the cigarette-dropped down his neck. He seemed to find it hot!

"Harry, old chap—" exclaimed Nugent.

Wharton did not heed.

He swung Tracy towards the door, yelling and struggling. The Co., silent, stood out of the way, to give him room to pass. In the doorway Gilbert put up a desperate resistance; but it did not avail him. He was swung off his feet, and hurled headlong into the Remove passage.

He crashed there, with a yell, and sprawled. Harry Wharton stood in the study doorway, with clenched hands, waiting for him to come back. But Gilbert realised that discretion was the better part of valour; and he did not come back.

THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER.

Nothing for Bunter!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"What the thump—"

"Leggo!" roared Billy Bunter. "Toddy, you beast, leggo! I say, you fellows, will you make him leggo?"

It was quite a startling scene in the Remove passage after prep. The door of Study No. 7 had opened, and William George Bunter emerged—with Peter Todd!

Peter had an iron grasp fixed on the back of Bunter's fat neck, and was propelling the fat junior in front of him.

Bunter did not seem to like it! He seemed to dislike it! But there was no choice in the matter for the fat Owl. That grip on the back of his neck was not to be argued with.

"What on earth's up?" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Bunter's going to put a contribution in the box for the School Hospital Fund!" explained Peter.

"I ain't!" shrieked Bunter.

"He's got twenty-five bob to drop in the box," went on Toddy. "I'm going to see him do it."

"I ain't!" shrieked Bunter.

"Oh, my hat! Where did Bunter get twenty-five bob from? Has his postal order come?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He won it on a bet!" explained Peter. "He bet on the match this afternoon and snopped twenty-five bob from the biggest blackguard in the Remove—"

"Thanks!" said Smithy, with a sneer, from the door of Study No. 4.

"Not at all," answered Peter affably. "You're welcome to hear my opinion of you, Smithy!"

"I say, you fellows, I ain't —"

"I've explained to Bunter that that frowsy sort of thing is barred in No. 7, and persuaded him to shove his ill-gotten gains into the hospital box!" said Peter blandly. "He thought of spending it on tuck at first, but I argued with him, and he changed his mind—"

"I haven't!" howled Bunter.

Thud!

Peter Todd's boot landed. It landed hard. The roar that followed, echoed from one end of the Remove passage to the other.

A chuckling crowd followed to the landing. The hospital box was in the hall below, and it seemed to have no attraction whatever for Billy Bunter. The noble cause of charity did not appeal to him so much as jam tarts and cream puffs!

But there were no jam tarts or cream puffs for the fat sportsman. He rolled reluctantly down the Remove staircase, propelled by Peter, and a crowd of laughing faces watched them over the banisters.

Mr. Quelch was to be seen below. At the sight of him, Billy Bunter had a gleam of hope.

"Toddy, you beast!" he hissed.

"Come on!"

"If you don't leggo, I'll call Quelch!" hissed Bunter.

"Do!" said Peter. "Quelch would like to know how you got that twenty-five bob! I think he would be fearfully interested."

"Oh crikey!"

Bunter gave up the idea of calling Quelch!

At the foot of the staircase Peter shifted his grasp from Bunter's neck to Bunter's arm—linking arms with him quite affectionately—but very securely.

But the hapless fat sportsman did not want to draw Quelch's attention, and he went like a lamb.

A fat fist with a pound note and two half-crowns in it hovered reluctantly over the slot in the hospital box. Bunter seemed to find it really impossible to unclose that fat hand!

He turned on Peter.

"I—I say, Toddy, old chap—halves!" he gasped.

It was the last appeal—and it failed! Peter lifted his foot!

"If Quelch wants to know why I'm booing you—" he began.

The fat fist enclosed! Bunter did not want Peter to boot him, and still less did he want Quelch to know why! Two half-crowns clinked into the hospital box, followed by a pound note!

"Good man!" said Peter.

"Beast!" groaned Bunter.

And that was that!

THE END.

(Once again the rascally Tracy has triumphed over his enemy. What will be his next move? For the answer, read "THE MYSTERY OF MR. QUELCH" next week's super story of Harry Wharton & Co.)

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